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EMILY HOBHOUSE



EMILY HOBHOUSE

About 1920

EMILY HOBHOUSE

A MEMOIR COMPILED

by

A. RUTH FRY

Author of *A Quaker Adventure*



With a Foreword by
General Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts, M.L.A.

JONATHAN CAPE
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CONTENTS

	Page 7
ILLUSTRATIONS	
FOREWORD BY GENERAL RT. HON. J. C.	
SMUTS, M.L.A.	9
NOTE	13
Chap. I LIFE AT ST. IVE, ¹ WITH APPENDICES BY PROF.	
L. T. HOBHOUSE AND MISS JULIA FARRER	17
II MINNESOTA AND MEXICO	41
III OUTBREAK OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR	63
IV FARM-BURNING IN THE BOER REPUBLICS	78
V FIRST VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA	91
VI THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS	100
VII THE LADIES' COMMISSION	139
VIII WORK IN ENGLAND	149
IX ARREST AND DEPORTATION	167
X TALLOIRES AND SOUTH AFRICA AGAIN	182
XI MORE TREKS IN RUINED DISTRICTS	209
XII RETURN TO ENGLAND 1904	220
XIII BOER HOME INDUSTRIES	234
XIV DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND TRANS-	
FER TO THE GOVERNMENTS	255
XV LIFE IN ITALY AND LAST VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA	260
XVI WAR-TIME VISITS TO BELGIUM AND GERMANY	266
XVII POST-WAR WORK FOR GERMAN CHILDREN;	
ILLNESS AND DEATH	278
XVIII CONCLUSION	295
APPENDIX	307
INDEX	315

¹ Pronounced Eve.

ILLUSTRATIONS

EMILY HOBHOUSE, ABOUT 1920	Frontispiece
MRS. REGINALD HOBHOUSE, ABOUT 1879	facing page 22
EMILY HOBHOUSE (LEFT) AND HER SISTER MAUD (NOW MRS. HEBBLETHWAITE), AS CHILDREN	24
EMILY HOBHOUSE, AGED ABOUT 15	28
ARCHDEACON HOBHOUSE, IN HIS LAST YEARS	38
EMILY HOBHOUSE IN 1895	44
LORD HOBHOUSE, ABOUT 1900	74
THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL MONUMENT, NEAR BLOEMFONTEIN, TO COMMEMOR- ATE THE DEATH OF 26,000 WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE WAR OF 1899— 1902. ONLY PRESIDENT STEYN, GEN- ERAL DE WET AND EMILY HOBHOUSE ARE BURIED THERE	296

FOREWORD

I GLADLY accede to the request to write a brief Foreword to the following interesting account of Emily Hobhouse. It can be all the briefer because the remarks which I made at her burial at Bloemfontein in 1926 are quoted in this book, and in those remarks I endeavoured to appraise her work and to express my sense of its profound significance for South Africa.

How far off the Boer War seems to-day, and what seas of war have flooded the world since, and made the sorrows and sufferings of an earlier day seem small and unreal in comparison! Pitiably indeed has been our human lot in our day – from the lurid close of the nineteenth century in the Boer War to the downfall of Europe in the Great War. And some may feel inclined to put the question: ‘Why revive these painful memories of the past? Has there not been enough of horror and destruction in these latter years to suffice for our lifetime? Why revert to the farm-burnings and concentration camps of the Boer War, when half the world is still bleeding from the deeper and fresher wounds of the Great War?’

Those who read this book will see that its intention is by no means to recall the horrors of the Boer War, but to commemorate the great soul who helped the people of South Africa to rise above its dangerous atmosphere and breathe a nobler air again. Emily Hobhouse’s hand it was that first was extended to us in our darkest hour, and helped us to climb out of the pit. A stormy petrel to her own people, she

was a great healing influence in South Africa. Amid the suffering of war, she represented the eternal human, the eternal woman, the simple feelings of pity and sympathy and comforting which the war spirit could not kill and which in the end have led to the rebirth of the larger South Africa. There are times when people are abnormally responsive to sympathy. It was at such a time that Emily Hobhouse made her appeal to what was deepest in the Boer soul, and opened out fountains of a common human fellow-feeling which have flowed continuously stronger ever since.

It is a strange, even an amazing story. This woman had spent half of her lifetime in an English provincial parsonage, occupied with parish work, far away from contacts with the great world where the terrible seeds of the future were germinating. When she was thirty-five years old, she emerged from this seclusion and went into the world with a very poor equipment for the battle of life, but with a character strong from high breeding and the nurture of great ideals of service, and with a heart of pure gold. Within six years thereafter she had passed through the most astonishing experiences, had held her own against some of the great ones of the earth, and had become a famous woman. And when at the end of her days she was laid to rest in South Africa, her ashes were received in what to the Boers is the most sacred spot of their land, and with a nation-wide homage which a king might have envied, and which in the past had been extended only to the greatest leaders and heroes of the Boer people. Such a life is surely worth recording!

She was in every way a very remarkable woman. She had more than a touch of real genius; she had a strong and vivid personality which at times made her difficult to work with; she had an invincible faith in spiritual things and values;

and, above all, she had a great spirit of human service which concentrated all the energy of her ardent nature, triumphed over all difficulties, but in the end left her physically drained and exhausted, and made her last years one long tale of pain and suffering.

But it was worth while: she lived her life, gave of her best, and made her mark; and, so far as South Africa is concerned, her work will be of enduring value, and has already become part and parcel of the sum of things that weigh heaviest in the life of a people.

She lies buried in the hearts of a grateful people.

Requiescat.

J. C. SMUTS

NOTE

THIS book is based on the incomplete autobiography, too long for publication *in extenso*, compiled by Miss Hobhouse. The arrangement of the matters treated has followed the original, in order that so far as possible she may speak direct to the reader. As the autobiography incorporates letters written at the time of the incident related, a footnote has been inserted in places where the return to the autobiography, written in later years, is not obvious. In some cases letters quoted in the manuscript without dates have had to be so inserted.

A. R. F.

THE LIFE OF EMILY HOBHOUSE

CHAPTER I

LIFE AT ST. IVE

IN thinking of Emily Hobhouse as I knew her through a number of years, I seem to see a picture of her in each of the three main periods of her life. First, in her early thirties, when she was living in Cornwall, with her father, as a visitor to her uncle and aunt, Lord and Lady Hobhouse in Somerset, I recall her singing West Country ballads in the hall at Charlton House, or at a village concert, with trained simplicity, and a joyous smile, which delighted her hearers, and made one forget the undercurrent of sadness which was so marked a feature of her nature. She was at home with such an audience, for she seemed to belong to the country and not to the town.

Next, I see her at the time of the South African War, when she had accepted the call to champion the cause of the Boer women and children. She is facing an angry meeting in Bristol, called to hear about the conditions in the Concentration Camps. The chairman, in a vain attempt to introduce a more friendly atmosphere, reads a chapter of the Bible, but chairs are hurled about, and it looks as if the platform would be stampeded. Emily Hobhouse is, throughout, undaunted and determined to do her utmost to gain attention for her story.

And then I see her in the last years of her life, hampered with the limitations of illness, mellowed with the rich experience of her life, her face still lighting up with that delightful smile, and as keen as ever on fighting for the

betterment of the oppressed. She writes, on looking again at a sketch from the window of her old room as a girl:

'Simple enough, but it moved me to tears, as it brought the sudden re-awakening of my girlhood's aspirations. Yet as I look at it, knowing the dreams are gone for ever, I am sensible of the same aspirations, the same stirring desires and lofty aims. I feel within the heart of a girl, while those around me see only the bowed form and decayed body. As I but rarely look in the glass, I am only conscious of this change by the feeling of imprisonment; the burden of a still ardent spirit pent up in a weak and useless frame, which cannot carry out its behests. When the final decay has gone will the torch of the spirit continue to burn, finding some better medium for its expression? I like Maeterlinck's thought: "The dead live again every time that we remember them." If this be true, perhaps the best of me, dear friends, will come to life every time you recall me to your minds. It is a solace to feel that, as I pen these words for you.'

At the age of sixty-two, and at the request of her great friend, Mrs. Steyn, Emily set to work to chronicle her life, quoting a certain German philosopher, that the incitement to autobiography comes from special, very deep-seated psychological conditions. He says, too: 'Real faithful memory is the source of reverence. . . . The greatest treasures of the world, even happiness itself, he would not take for his memories.' She continues:

'As I read over the old letters and papers of 60 years, the FIRST thing that strikes me is the many mistakes I

have made – the frequent misjudgment of men and things. Viewing it all in the light of riper experience I see in a flash how much better I could have acted – or written – or spoken. Is this, I wonder, a universal experience?

‘Waller must have felt this when he wrote:

“The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home.”

‘With so many errors it is strange that one has “muddled through.” It could only be because the aims were true, however great the ignorance in trying to attain to them.

‘SECONDLY, I am struck—how *pain passes* whether physical, mental, or spiritual. Gashes may be left, but they do heal. One can read with surprise the burning words written under pressure of some torture through which one has passed.

‘And thirdly, how often I have been misunderstood – almost entirely from my inability to explain myself – through lack of ready words, or through lack of courage.’

Emily Hobhouse was born on the 9th April 1860, the fifth living child of Reginald Hobhouse, Rector of St. Ives, a village near Liskeard, Cornwall, afterwards Archdeacon of Bodmin, a member of the well-known Hobhouse family, whose members were prosperous merchants in Bristol in the eighteenth century. Their first certain ancestor was John Hobhouse, who lived at Minehead towards the end of the

seventeenth century, and whose house still stands there, till recently called by his name. Archdeacon Hobhouse's father, Henry Hobhouse (the third of that name, whose eldest grandson to-day is the fifth), was a distinguished public servant, holding successively the offices of Solicitor to the Customs and the Treasury, Permanent Under-Secretary to the Home Office, and Keeper of the State Papers. He died in 1854, leaving seven surviving children, of whom the Archdeacon was the youngest but one.

Of her father, who was educated at Eton and Balliol,¹ Emily Hobhouse writes:

'Never brilliant, he possessed very good abilities. His father destined him for the Church, but there exist letters from him to his father which indicate that though he was drawn to the Ministry, yet he feared himself unfit to write sermons for he had always experienced the greatest difficulty in composition. . . . However, his father and Dr. Jenkyns, Master of Balliol, considered that he underrated his power of composition, and his ordination was decided upon. As one who sat under his sermons till the age of thirty-four, I can testify that they were always well expressed and clear. Though dull to my mind they were far above the average sermon one hears. The trouble rather was, that he had so little to say – not that he could not say it. He lived too much apart from ordinary humanity to understand it well, and strictly ruled out all that was modern in thought and science from his reading. His preaching never modernized. He was a man of very deep (though

¹ He rowed in the 'Varsity Boat in 1839, and was on the Committee which established the O.U.B.C., and for a time acted as President.

repressed) feeling and he never dared approach the emotional as it meant a breakdown. There was one sermon of his (written for All Saints' Day) in which his cold style was laid aside. It was the only one I ever heard him preach which contained any beauty or which at all impressed me, and he preached it year after year. He invariably broke down in it, and was unable to control his voice. This is, however, a digression. His father decided for him and before me lies a letter from Sir Robert Peel dated Jan'y 26th 1841,¹ written to my grandfather with the offer of the Crown living of St. Ive for his son. The reported value being £362 per annum, Sir Robert Peel wrote: "I shall have greater pleasure in that destination of the living than in any other I could make." It was accepted, and held till the day of his death, Jan. 27, 1895 - 51 years. . . .'

Mr. Hobhouse lived alone in his cottage rectory till 13th August 1851, when he married Miss Caroline Salusbury Trelawny, of Harewood House, Calstock, for whose comfort a better and larger rectory was built.

Mrs. Hobhouse came of the distinguished Trelawny family, with a long and interesting pedigree. Her daughter writes of her that she was

'a woman of distinguished bearing, combined with quick parts, and a natural manner of extreme charm. [She] applied her unusual abilities to the education of her children, shewing herself an indulgent and devoted Mother. With a father whose sternness with himself, shewed itself in sternness to his children, a little over-indulgence in the Mother was needed, and till her death

¹ Probably this should be 1844.

in 1880, she was the medium between us and our reserved and silent father. Not really handsome, she yet had beautiful eyes and colouring and the rich golden brown Trelawny hair – and with her abounding vivacity she came to live in the wee cottage, in what was, at that time, the dirty village of St. Ive where the pigs were allowed to run free in the road. She wisely applied herself to parochial work, and the poor, amongst whom she moved as a friend on simplest terms, loved her dearly. Visiting the poor as she did almost daily, became her great outlet. In addition, she read widely, enjoying French, German and Italian. . . . My Mother did her duty well and her sense of humour was the salvation of our home and kept a continuous sparkle. In one matter only did she fall short. Economy seemed impossible to her. Alike by temperament and by upbringing she was open-handed to a fault, and under the influence of shop-keepers frequently made most imprudent purchases. In spite of this we were brought up on strictly economical lines. This had to be during the early years of married life when the united income of the living, slightly increased by an allowance from the parents, HAD to suffice.’

The early years of the marriage brought much sorrow, for the two eldest children died in infancy, the death of the second, a remarkably precocious child, leaving an indelible grief with the parents. But when Emily was born there were already three girls and one boy, and more than four years later, the last child, Leonard (now Professor of Sociology in London University), was born. He, according to his sister, very early became the master of the nursery,



MRS. REGINALD HOBHOUSE

About 1879

and even of the family, by reason of his intellectual powers and fine character. It is obvious that from the very early days, when she admired his wonderful golden curls, through the days of adolescence, when he brought to the quiet rectory progressive ideas which were little known there, and on through their mature life, the influence of her brother and her admiration for him, were some of the strongest factors in Emily Hobhouse's life.

In her childhood there is not much to detain us, but one incident is worth mentioning. She writes:

'I do not know if the sense of having an ego of one's own comes to others at a given moment, or grows imperceptibly, but it was when I was three or four years old that I learnt this – to me – surprising fact. It was taught me by the large nursery clock, which hung on a bit of wall between the day and night nurseries. I had had a good dinner – and felt some little oppression in consequence – giving me the unusual consciousness of a body, – and I was sent to see the time. Though I was uncomfortable, there was the clock (with its familiar face) going unperturbably on with its business and it even struck 3 p.m. while I stood below looking up at it. I suddenly realized that the clock was not me, and I was not it, – but outside it and different, suffering discomfort. Before, I had seemed part of everything round me, and now I found out that I stood alone, outside – and different from – my environment. It was a curious revelation; it had been very nice being part of everything, with no separate sense of individuality. Yet I felt suddenly very proud and puffed up with a quite new sense of dignity.'

On her seventh birthday she writes to her parents: 'I shall try to be a sensible child, now that I am seven years old.'

Very early we find mention of a visit to London, to her Uncle Arthur and Aunt Mary (afterwards Lord and Lady Hobhouse), whose friendship in after years remained so greatly valued. Of some childish illness on this visit in 1866, her aunt writes:

'Emily has been much the least poorly, and has taken her illness, as she does other events of life, with more calmness and resolution than the others. She is a remarkable child, and seems to me to have quite a manly character in her girlish frame.' And a little later, 'I cannot yet settle which is my favourite of the dear little trio – who are very popular among young and old, wherever they go. Blanch gets the largest share of rebukes, but I do not like her the less for that; indeed I think she interests me the most – and Emily is so sensible and good-tempered and Maud so coaxing and so arch that I cannot settle on a preference. Stafford Northcote¹ calls them my "bunch of roses."'

This visit was the first of many long ones to her uncle and aunt, who took charge of three or four of the children for months at a time, when their parents were obliged to winter on the Riviera for the sake of the Rector's health, which was very bad for some years.

A number of beautifully written letters from the aunt to the mother, still extant, tell, almost from day to day, of the welfare of the children, and show her wise care of them. It must have been a great comfort to the mother, so far away,

¹ The Conservative statesman, afterwards 1st Earl of Iddesleigh, Lady Hobhouse's brother-in-law.



EMILY HOBHOUSE (LEFT) AND HER
SISTER MAUD (NOW MRS.
HEBBLETHWAITE)
As children

to be able to fancy her little girls even in the changes of frocks for differing times of day, and differing smartness of occasion! She writes:

‘Their white and black alpaca are for dancing or small family tea-parties, and my blue and white frocks are best of all, only worn for real *parties*, with little white silk gloves, and Blanch has white kid boots, of which, and her locket, the little ones are somewhat jealous, I believe. They each got an old chandelier drop from a man who was repairing ours the other day, and decorate themselves with this and a bit of black elastic on common evenings here!’

Their childish ailments, too, and the remedies, are described in detail, and these appear to have given their aunt much more concern than childish tempers, which seem to have been wonderfully good; she often refers to their reasonableness, especially with herself, though there are hints that governesses sometimes think otherwise, in which case she apparently took the children’s side. Emily’s determination of character showed itself early, for when she was seven, her aunt writes: ‘Valentine Day brought them four Valentines each, greatly to their satisfaction, though Emily is rather dubious as to one containing a strutting hen, and the motto, “Wherever I am, I will always be missis.” Her sisters and Miss Turnor think it highly suitable, which makes Emily a little *shy* over it.’

A succession of governesses gave the girls their education, but Emily regretted bitterly that with one exception they were inefficient and often cross, in fact, as little loved or appreciated as were many governesses of that day, and one realizes that the chasm between the grown-up and the child

was very little bridged in the family. This was probably accentuated by the Rector's bad health, which as already noticed necessitated long visits to the Riviera with his wife. The grown-up who did manage to understand, and enter into the children's interests, was a curate of their father's, who for some years delighted them with his friendship and help in their games and occupations, and with whom Emily was an especial favourite. She tells of this friendship in her autobiography.

'My father's health remained but poor during the summer of 1867 and he was quite unable to preach. His church duties fell to Mr. St. Aubyn Rogers, who now entered into our lives and was – for me at least – the most beloved grown-up figure of my childhood. He was my first love. It had begun the previous summer when I was just six, and he had been engaged to carry on the parish during Papa's long and dangerous illness, but the summer of 1867 we were in closer contact because the arrangement was that he lodged in the schoolhouse where he could have breakfast and supper, but for dinner he always came to the Rectory. With the grown-ups he was not a favourite; they were frankly bored by him and considered him prosy and stiff; they ridiculed his looks – with his "glassy" blue eyes and huge red nose. I suppose he was ugly, but I thought him beautiful. He had established a kind of secret fellowship with us children, and changed his whole countenance instantly when he thought the grown-ups observed him. He made bread pills at dinner and relieved the awful tedium of that meal by flicking them across to me with great dexterity and an

imperturbable countenance, his eyes fixed on far-off objects outside the window. If a pill was discovered it could not have been traced to him. The danger over, his eyes would twinkle at me. After dinner the wet days he would play battledore and shuttlecock with us, then much in vogue. He would take us in turn; often Maud and Leonard would play one side of the room and he and I the other, or we would play in threes or fours. But he and I practised together for the most part and became very skilful, till at last the proud day came when we kept up 2,000 times. How hot and fatigued we were! and excited. It took nearly two hours, and Papa in the study must have been nearly mad with the tap tap of the battledores.

'Fine days he would play hide and seek with us (for though about 60 years old and stiff, he was wonderfully active). He knew all about gardening and tilled our private plots for us; he was a carpenter and made barrows, ships, garden tables and chairs for us; his bows and arrows were perfect; he helped with our hens and chickens and rabbits; our hoops and sticks; made me a nice fork to toss the hay and entered with zeal into every game.

'During those years that our father was an invalid and quite unable to bear the noise of children "Old Rodge" was everything to us, and my devoted slave in particular. He was a very solitary old bachelor and undoubtedly we were a godsend to him. . . . Never since have I had a friend so completely devoted to me. I have digressed to speak of "Old Rodge," he being for me the background of the happiest part of St. Ives life that I can recall. . . .'

But unfortunately the grown-ups failed to appreciate his merits and he went, leaving one little broken heart behind him!

This sense of isolation evidently did not diminish. Of the year 1875, Emily Hobhouse writes:

'All that year I had a deep sense of dawning womanhood, which I could not in the least understand. I looked in vain all my life for some one to talk to, and discuss things with, and explain things, but no one had time – the governesses were shallow and incompetent and I was but one of "the little ones" and of no account. I envied the boys the special tutors they had, people whose brains they had the right to pick; of whom they might ask any questions. I never had anyone to cut my mental teeth upon. So school-lessons always bored me because they were (as taught us) so superficial. They never told me the thing I wanted to know. If you asked, you were told "Little girls should not ask questions." Early next year I was sent to the same school with Maud. It was then passing (unknown to us) into the hands of a Mrs. –, a majestic, kind-hearted, but wholly ignorant woman, who had an invalid husband to maintain. One always felt half-starved there, and small wonder Blanch had lost her health. My own health began to fail and the doctor ordered me horse-exercise (so I had riding lessons) and a *second helping* at dinner. This was yielded with evident reluctance, and I was made a daily object of derision, called "plough boy" and so forth. I was growing very fast, and felt ravenous, and the food was so poor it had little nourishment. But circumstances cut short my school-days,



EMILY HOBHOUSE

Aged about 15

and very thankful I was, that the midsummer term ended school-life.'

The reason for this was the illness of the elder daughter Blanch, which had begun in the spring, and after the marriage in September of the eldest daughter Carrie, the parents decided to take their three remaining daughters to Mentone for the winter. Although the illness seems to have been very serious from the first, it was thought best for the patient not to realize her condition, and her sisters, at all events, had a happy winter. They were in a circle of pleasant English people whose intellectual society made perhaps some amends for the lack of continued education; but again and again Emily laments that accomplishments, such as painting and singing, took the place of mental training, and when, after the death of her sister, and the family's return to England she pleaded for more schooling, she was told that the very heavy expenses of the winter abroad left no money available for this.

'No doubt there were exceptions, but, using general terms, she says that her education was from a succession of ignorant governesses, who were wholly incompetent (nursery governesses in fact) and two terms at a most ill-managed and inferior boarding-school. All my life I have been conscious of this deprivation, which has been the root cause of many of my mistakes. It could not, perhaps, have been helped, but Maud and I have had to learn bit by bit by hard experience as we went along through life.'

It was but natural that the death of her sister, to whom

she was especially attached, and with whom she felt a particular sympathy and understanding, should have left a great scar in Emily's life. She refers to the years following as being a period of much gloom. To a girl of such strong emotions, and such great capacity, the return to the uneventful life of a village buried in the country, with few companions, must have been a great strain; it is sad to think that with the exception of her brother Leonard, she had too little in common in ideas with her family to feel anything but a sense of repression. The fate of very many women of the Victorian age was hers — too great ability and too little scope to utilize it. She herself felt that the severe self-discipline of such a life was a necessary preparation for her later work. One cannot help wishing that it had been tempered by a greater freedom and wider responsibility which would have given her a stronger experience of human nature and a better ability for rapid judgment.

To quote again from her memories:

'From the break-up caused by Carrie's marriage and Blanch's death, all was changed. Not only was Mamma's spirit crushed and Papa occupied more and more outside the parish, but each of us began to branch out in separate directions and there was a general feeling of dislocation. Naturally energetic in mind and body, I was afforded no outlet for the former by real hard mental work. My mind without even Blanch to talk to, turned in upon itself, and a natural mysticism and romance was unhealthily stimulated. I lived with heroes in this imaginary world and fell ardently in love with these fabulous beings. Current literature we were hardly allowed, so our studies, if

such they could be called, took almost entirely the form of music, singing and drawing. For the rest, the parish was the only outlet, and such knowledge and experience as I gained during the next years were imbibed from labouring amongst them. Maud took the people who lived near at hand; she could not walk well and was shy of strangers and of lonely walks. I loved the exercise and to roam in all directions to the limits of the parish (only about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles across each way) and indeed I was always profoundly angered by parochial limitations; the system seemed so absurd. So to the furthest farms and extremest limits of our parish I would go. I always wanted to embrace wide tracts of country and large masses of people and dreamt of their universal conversion to goodness (which for me meant then the Church of England) and of a lift to material well-being.

'It was long before I learnt that what appeals to one does not to another and that you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

'I had too, the conviction of extreme youth, that all clergymen were perfect, and all educated people high-minded and incapable of mean or cruel action – that governments only consisted of such beings and that Members of Parliament were all angelic; I worked to bring the parish up to this level.

'It was yet long years before I discovered that a parish was but the world in miniature, that perfection pertained to no class or profession, not even to those who represent and govern us! I was even to hear the Church preach blood and thunder! In a word, I lived in a world of unrealities, and had my training from simple

and ignorant folk only – endurance and contentment with little – and much lore of a simpler kind. I became familiar with sick-beds and death. I did not hold with my Father's policy of courteous avoidance of dissenters; but visited them equally and indeed in the latest years of life at St. Ive insisted upon their joining us in *social* affairs, such as choral societies and entertainments. I read [nothing] (and could have little opportunity of reading) but religious books; sermons and commentaries and the goody-goody stories of Miss Yonge and Miss Sewell. During 1878–9 cousins came and went – but the predominating atmosphere was depressing and narrowing from the date of Blanch's death. Even the advent of Carrie's first two babies created but a secondary interest in Mamma's mind.'

Lovers seem to have broken the monotony of life fairly frequently, but in no case did the affair mature.

The illness and death of Mrs. Hobhouse in 1880 was followed next year by a dangerous illness of the Archdeacon, in which Emily took her share in the nursing, – a very heavy strain. Added to this was the responsibility for the care of the parish, in which she received sympathy and advice from Bishop (afterwards Archbishop) Benson. The break-up of the family caused by her mother's death left her increasingly lonely, especially as her only unmarried sister Maud was preoccupied with her own engagement. Emily's own health seems to have given her much suffering, increased by two severe accidents, after one of which in Venice she had to lie for long on her back, and of which she never entirely lost the effects. Consequently, her parish

work and her care of her father were interrupted by long absences to recuperate either in England or, on at least one occasion, abroad. On this last, she met Lord and Lady Hobhouse, and stayed with them for some months, feeling the great happiness of their delightful company, due to their wide interests and sympathies, and their charm of character.

Church work was a real interest to Emily Hobhouse, and in 1884 she made her first public speech in connection with it. It was at a Women's Conference at Truro, to discuss an organization for raising funds for the Cathedral, in which work she took part for years. Of her speech she writes:

'I well recollect my first essay at speaking at a Conference. His address finished, the Bishop asked the women to make suggestions. Dead silence. He repeated his invitation. Still silence. I was brimful of ideas, and as no one else spoke, I rose. But at the first sound of a woman's voice, the whole room with one great swish turned round to see who it was, and dead with fright, I collapsed. The Bishop begged me to continue, and I did so, but haltingly, made conscious of myself. But the ice was broken, and to others it came easier. Next day the Bishop thanked me for it, and I met Canon Cornish in the road, who did the same. It set the ball rolling. The Bishop wished me to be the Organizing Secretary of this movement, but Papa forbid it.'

Continuing, she writes:

'With Alfred in New Zealand, and Maud and Leonard also married, I was left literally the last bird in the

nest, and from Maud's marriage in 1889, to my Father's death in 1895, I experienced a period of fresh and unusual trial and loneliness. I find but few records of these years, which left their scorching marks upon me. The very emotional form of religion taught by Canon Mason and Bishop Wilkinson had been superseded by a more intellectual influence, and I read deeply Westcott, Mozeley, Liddon and many others, Church and Holland. *Ecce Homo* influenced my mind, and now and again I got hold of a book which opened up intellectual interests. I felt less and less able to keep up parish work at the high pitch of former years, added to the fearful strain of the home life. . . . It produced hysteria. During these years, I devoted myself to singing and the violin and piano, and at one period (I think the winter following Leonard's marriage) I was so low that I took to illumination. . . . Finally I attempted writing, but never succeeded in that till my mind was released from the shackles of St. Ive life. I find *no records* of these years. They are recorded only on my spirit, and fortunately will die with me. It was in a word a period of torture quite unrealizable for anyone, even for those who knew the outward circumstances, and none but myself could be aware of the inward circumstances.

'It was lightened only for a brief spell by the event of my Father's Jubilee, and the drawing together of the parish to do him honour. This took place August 6th, 1894 . . . The family (Alfred excepted) gathered for the occasion, which meant immense work for me in arranging a public dinner and tea and later an evening in the school, with speeches and music. . . . It was

the last public parish function of our St. Ive life. The family very shortly dispersed, and I was left alone with Papa once more to face the terrible and painful illness that shortly fell upon him, and which ended fatally Jan. 27th of the coming year. For the last two years he had never gone to church except with my arm: I waited for him always at the side door to take him to Church and again in the Vestry to bring him home. . . . I drove him out in the pony-carriage almost daily. . . . He died on Jan. 27th, '95, in a bitter frost and snow. . . . The end had come. Home and shelter gone. Before me the Unknown. With him, not only life at St. Ive was ended, but also our life as a *family*.'

A fortnight after his death, Emily Hobhouse left St. Ive, never to return.

'Childhood and girlhood were over. Some sunshine and many storms were past. I was free, but also I knew that I was uneducated, and unfit to find any useful place in the world. I had parish experience, but nothing else.'

This ended the first chapter in Emily Hobhouse's life, a chapter in which, after the happy days of childhood were past, isolation and repression had, as ever, their usual bad effects, leading in her case to morbid introspection and hysteria. St. Ive, even now, looks apart from the world; in the days before motors and bicycles it must have been remote in the extreme. This isolation made her almost entirely dependent on her father's society, and despite his fine character, his Victorian ideals of parenthood kept them far apart. I remember her

telling me that she used to ration subjects of conversation, such as newspaper topics for breakfast, Church matters for lunch and so on, in order to keep some intercourse alive. The outward circumstances were difficult; they were rendered doubly so by Emily Hobhouse's intense reserve in her early days and a temperament which inhibited her from seeking relief by open discussions with her family and friends. She felt herself apart, and thereby lost the immense help of friendship and sympathy. Perhaps this very isolation of spirit was partly the reason of her being able to carry out her wider work, for the temperament capable of that can scarcely be one which finds satisfaction in a quiet home life.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER I

I CANNOT but think that in this account of her earliest years my sister read into the past too much of the melancholy and sense of failure that belong to old age. As a fact, our childhood was extremely happy, happy for all of us and not least for her, who had all through life an astonishing zest for the object in hand which was the other side to the melancholy of reflection. Probably, as she says, I as the spoilt youngest came off best of all. But we all enjoyed, however ignorant of our blessings, a care-free life without the multiplied distractions of town-bred children, but constantly bathed in the kindness and care of our parents. My father's illnesses alone caused some degree of separation from them when I was between two and four years of age and Emily from six to eight; but we had a loving and devoted nurse in Anna Gane, and a not less devoted man

friend in her husband, Thomas, who was the gardener, greatly loved by all of us and especially by my much older brother and myself. They gave our family twenty-two years of their lives, and the sudden death of Thomas in 1876 was the first great sorrow that either Emily or I knew, and it came just at the beginning of my sister Blanch's long and eventually fatal illness, followed not long after by the death of Anna, and finally in 1880 by the terribly painful illness and death of my mother. By these events our world was completely changed. But the first twelve years of my life, bringing Emily to the age of sixteen, appear to me in retrospect a period of such tranquil happiness as one would wish for any child as a background to the storms and stresses of later years, a kind of unquestioned security and confidence hardly attainable for the modern child, for whom every crossing of the road is a danger. I should say that the only cloud upon the picture came from the doctrine of eternal punishment with which the air of a Cornish parish of that period was over-charged and which certainly affected my mind at times, though I do not know how much it weighed upon the others.

My mother, as Emily shows, was a first-rate companion. Not young (she was thirty-nine when Emily was born and nearly forty-four when I followed), she lived with us on the footing which is supposed to be the discovery of the modern generation, and took us about with her as companions, exercising no discoverable discipline. She was extremely vivacious and could be very witty, so that some of her sharp retorts became a tradition in the family. She read French, German and Italian with ease and pleasure and taught me Latin before I went to school. What was more, she used to read aloud to us. It was she who introduced us to Mr.

Micawber and Mrs. Gamp, and the first ambition in passing from infancy to childhood was to be allowed to sit up for the reading.

My father was certainly much more apart, but he was never untender or unkind. I do not recollect his ever punishing any one of us. That sort of fear was not within our horizon. But he was remorseless in exacting duty and the repair of neglect, and a few mild words of disapproval fell from him with tons' weight, and not on us alone. He was for us all an incarnation of justice and iron rectitude, which we took as of course as a part of the natural framework of things, so much so that it was only with surprise and lingering incredulity that we came to discover that such a standard is not universal. A certain simplicity which persisted in Emily through years of controversy and immersion in public affairs, which kept her trustful and expecting to be trusted, is traceable to this influence. He was also, perhaps not so entirely to the good, singularly immovable in his resolutions when once deliberately formed. His sole guide was duty for us as for himself, and of the psychological effect of the regime he seems to have had no glimpse. It is also true that he could not enter into our childish ways. I have no doubt that the loss of the little Rennie, the first-born son on whom he lavished the utmost of a father's love, was the cause of this. The little fellow remained a memory to us, long years after his short life was over, through my mother. My father, she would freely tell us, felt that he could never dare to let himself go again as he had done in his love for that child. He saw himself unable to live through such an experience twice, and I can well understand him. The consequence was that he put a bridle on himself in his relations with us, and then came illnesses,



ARCHDEACON HOBHOUSE

In his last years

absences and a breach of continuity. More and more he retired into himself, and his inner feelings were of the deepest. Emily has mentioned a sermon which he could not preach without emotion. I recollect another on the occasion of Thomas Gane's death. There was indeed in him too much repressed emotion to allow of easy speech, but his attention once gained he would enjoy a joke as heartily as any man. I well remember in the latest years his joining in a trick at Emily's expense. She, once absorbed in a conversation, could be sublimely indifferent to passing events. One day at tea, on my father passing his cup to be replenished, she, absorbed in the table-talk, took it in one hand, and passed it on to her neighbour on the other side with the other. A silent conspiracy at once arose in which my father joined, and the cup getting back to him he duly passed it on again, and we all waited breathlessly to see how many times it would go round. It was not in fact till the third round that the situation exploded. Now a man who could enter into a little jest of that kind was not frozen by age and suffering.

But it is true that after my mother's death, which broke my father physically and entailed another long absence, he withdrew further into his shell, and when by 1889 all of us were grown up, gone abroad or married, life at St. Ive became dreary and limited. It was those last five or six years at home which drove Emily in upon herself and left the mark of melancholy on her mind. Fortunately her greatest asset of vivid and versatile interest remained with her, and on the break-up of the St. Ive life soon began to show itself allied with practical powers for which we had hardly given her credit.

Miss Julia Farrer, a niece of Lady Hobhouse's, a lifelong and much-valued friend of Emily's, gives the following impressions of the Archdeacon from her visits to his home in her twenties:

'I probably make mistakes in details, but roughly, I used to hear that Mr. Hobhouse had been presented to the livings of St. Cleer with St. Ive: that his conscience forbade him to be a pluralist.

'There were strong points of resemblance between Reginald and Arthur Hobhouse, both physically and in their great qualities of honesty and justice. Arthur was more brilliant mentally, Reginald was handsomer in person. As a white-haired man, in his Archdeacon's dress, he was most impressive. No one could glance at him without feeling his true distinction. He had taken his share in the foundation of the Diocese of Truro, and was venerated throughout Cornwall. He was a grave man, but his occasional flashes of humour, and picturesque turns of speech used to delight me.

'I heard that as a young man, his brother Edmund (afterwards Bishop) had rebuked him for waste of time in reading a novel, and that he never read another.

'The qualities I recognized in the Archdeacon were his entire devotion to duty, his disregard of any personal gain, his truthful mind, his just judgment, and his brave endurance of physical discomfort. Also his soul was gentle. These are what an ignorant young woman could see in him. Bishops and Clergy no doubt valued him for other powers unknown to me. He set an example of self-discipline that must have been of the highest value to his children always.'

CHAPTER II

MINNESOTA AND MEXICO

1895

EMILY HOBHOUSE was naturally at a loss in facing the world alone on the cessation of the long experienced restraint in all the details of her life. Keen to use and develop her powers, she was met by rebuff after rebuff; her age was well-nigh prohibitive to starting on a career, either through a University or Hospital training, and she had to give up both ideas. Through some misunderstanding she did not realize at first that the congenial home which her uncle and aunt would gladly have offered, might be hers altogether, though she was often with them for months at a time. Later, after her return from U.S.A., the offer was definitely given, but she felt that the quiet, comfortable life they lived would not give her the scope she needed for work, or companionship with those of her own age. It was through these visits that I first knew her, when Lord and Lady Hobhouse came yearly to Charlton House, near Bristol. Here there seemed to be an endless succession of members of the Hobhouse clan, and Emily remained with them as 'daughter,' helping to arrange the comings and goings, and the picnics and tea-parties, which we, as younger neighbours, shared with gusto.

However, a desire to see something of the world, combined with the belief that parish work was all she was fitted for, awoke an old dream of working amongst the Cornish-

men who had emigrated to the wild mining districts of the U.S.A. Through Mrs. Benson (wife of the Archbishop), the Bishop of Minnesota's help was enlisted.

'His Archdeacon . . . took the matter in hand and the long and short was that I was committed to work in a mining village called Virginia [in Minnesota], before I had satisfied myself that there were any Cornishmen there. My *intention* had been to travel in those parts and find out for myself the lie of the land, but instead, I found myself looked upon as a Church Missionary, fixed to a Mining Camp or town composed of every nationality in Europe, and almost no Cornishmen. I found, too, that I was expected to work on the narrowest lines as if I were an Episcopalian curate! I placed the matter before Bishop Whipple, who advised a year's trial of the work, and I obliged him, working hard for 12 months for the town at large and for all in and around it; but (except as regards choir work) for no one church in particular.'

Certainly the life and work were a rough school of experience, and gave ample scope for the most varied qualifications and energy. Few women of her upbringing would, I think, have stood it, or have managed to accomplish anything, when faced with such grave difficulties. Having diagnosed the evils, however, Emily Hobhouse combated them, practically single handed, braving alike the anger of saloon-keepers at drastic temperance work, and that of narrow-minded ministers at undenominational social work, and by her fearlessness winning the devotion of men who were considered to be outcasts from decent society. Added to all lack of congenial society among people of her own outlook

were material discomforts, including a temperature often very many degrees below zero.

The story shall be told in her graphic letters.

To her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite:

‘VIRGINIA,

‘*August 19th, 1895*

‘I am in Virginia, and Virginia is in the heart of a primæval forest, thick, black, impenetrable, well-nigh pathless, stretching away on all sides mile after mile without habitation or cultivation. I assure you it was all I could do to force myself to stay here – my impulse was to turn and flee. I could hardly bring myself to have my trunks brought from the station, it seemed like rivetting myself here, but it was done, and the cases I packed alone at Oxford I am unpacking alone here. There is a humorous side to everything, and certainly to life here, and it is best to write about that side and I very much wish I could. It would amuse you to look in on me at this dirty casual boarding-house and see me at meals in company with Miss Whiteley, a London girl stranded in this out-of-the-way region, a Mr. Jackson who runs the grocery store here, and a Mr. Stephens, a land agent. The meals, ugh! keen hunger forces them down, but it ends to-morrow, for I go over to take possession of my cot. . . . It is much more expensive than Oxford, and I shall have to live *very* carefully here. So I am buying very, very little furniture. Stoves one must buy to live at all, fire-places there are none, and a couple of hospital beds and some wooden chairs secondhand. . . .

‘One woman who sent for me turned out to be a sister of

our Anne Snowden . . . and lived at St. Ive till she was eleven . . . and was full of enquiry for every creature at home.

‘“And I suppose you are Miss Emily,” she said, and it did sound so funny out here and so out of place.’

To her aunt, Lady Hobhouse:

‘20th August, 1895

‘[I was] very glad to get away from the dirty boarding-house and its distasteful meals. They have put electric light into the cottage; it is cheaper here than buying a supply of lamps and kerosene oil, and told me it was completed, but American-like I discovered when I came to turn it on they had omitted the rather important part of connecting it with the battery, so I was in darkness. This and being very tired drove me to bed early, and it was with great satisfaction I made up my bed with nice clean St. Ive blankets and linen, on a wire hospital bedstead in a fresh scrubbed and white-washed room. I had not been in bed half an hour, before, to my horror, I felt movement, and by the dim light from the street found the place was infested with creatures I had never seen before. . . . It was really sickening. I jumped out, and bundled on my clothes in the dark, and fled from that haunted house: the boarding-house people kindly took me in again and I was thankful to put up with the lesser degree of dirt.’

The house proved so impossibly dirty that a move to a more expensive and larger one had to be made. Happily, a Cornish girl, Mary Scourey, was with her as maid and helper in many difficulties,



EMILY HOBHOUSE

In 1895

To her sister-in-law, Mrs. L. T. Hobhouse:

'16th September, 1895

'Five bodies of Christians of different kinds settled and working here, besides the Episcopalians, and of them a fair number of what are called here educated people, with absolutely nothing to do but twiddle their thumbs, who come and yawn and almost cry out to me to deliver them from their dullness, people who could turn to and do what has to be done if they would – and last but not least – practically no Cornish miners . . . 55 will amply cover the Cornish in this vicinity, and of these the majority are the captains, bosses, superintendents, etc., just a very few are working miners and when they are divided by night and day shift there would remain about 5 spread over an area of 3 miles. . . .

'Of course there is a quantity of work to do here – hard work too – but of so difficult a character that I doubt if I am competent to begin it, but I gave my word to try the work here till next Spring, and so I will if I can and will work as hard as I know how – but of course it will all take a different shape.

'First, I saw at once that a crying need here was a Reading and Recreation room on a large scale for the town, and as one for my own countrymen cannot be conducted, I have determined to set the other going, and for that purpose have to-day called on all the Ministers in the town, and representatives of each denomination and asked them to co-operate with me and work shoulder to shoulder against the drink, gambling, etc. They say they are all "with me" and are coming to meet at my house and set the thing on

a sure foundation so that it may be permanent. Won't it be a funny meeting? . . . Meanwhile my own room I am turning into a night-school for Finlanders, who are ambitious to learn up at the Franklin Mine.'

To her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite.

'September 28th, 1895

'Certainly, there is everything to be done, but I do not feel very competent. Try and imagine the place. All the riff-raff, the tag-rag and bob-tail of society, the dregs of population who cannot get in anywhere else flock to a place like Virginia – of all nationalities and classes.

'No law of any kind is enforced – there is complete freedom of action and speech. True, there are policemen, but men who do not do their duty, and indeed, openly violate the law, and invite the Mayor and Town Council to look on and co-operate. These last are dishonest and corrupt to a degree you cannot imagine at home. The other day they narrowly escaped being "shown up" and thrown into the State Prison, which, indeed, would be the best thing for them and for the town. They embezzle the public money, and it is a well-known fact, but no one *dare* expose them, for in Virginia every one is tied hand and foot, and if they are showed up by others would either be showed up or burst up themselves. The officers of the town and the Justices of the Peace all gained their seats only by votes bought with beer, and fear to lose them. About 40 saloons get the greatest part of the men's earnings at the mines, and the Ministers *dare not preach a sermon* on the temperance question. Four houses of ill-fame,

of large size, are in this little town, and are looked on as a necessity, which alone makes it possible for respectable women to walk abroad. Gambling is rampant from early morning through day and night. The little timid group of churches all huddled together in one corner are absolutely powerless and do not attempt to touch or reduce the crying evils of the place.

'The Ministers *dare* not speak out, they *dare not* give offence, — for to lose even one member of their congregation is to lose a portion of their small salaries. I verily believe I am the only person in the place not afraid to say and do what I think right, because I am not dependent on one of them, and if I were, I do hope I should not be so cowed.

'It is plain to me that until the corrupt state of the town is somewhat cleansed, the saloons reduced in number and limited by enforced law, the bad houses swept away and the municipal body composed of honest men, nothing much can be done, the churches will stand empty as they do to-day. The way must be cleared first.

'I feel proud to say, that amid this mass of corruption, the Cornish men as a whole stand out on a high level. Of course there are a few who are terrible drunkards, but as a whole the Cornish have risen to the top; by their sobriety, energy, skill and work, they have usurped practically all the best places in the mines, and are captains, superintendents, and bosses of one kind or another, and mostly well-conducted Methodists.'

Evidently Minnesota was far from prohibition in those days!

To her aunt, Lady Hobhouse:

'October 14th, 1895

'Every day I go to the Hospital. At first I only went to visit a Cornishman who had typhoid, but found such a sad state of affairs there that I thought it best to continue going as long as I am allowed, to try and alleviate the sufferings of the patients at least a little.

'The state of things there yesterday will give you an idea of the place. No doctor or anyone in the building except a Swedish hired man of all work, who, having been up the whole previous night at a drinking party of some kind, had fallen into a tipsy sleep on a bed in the lower ward. Failing to make him hear, I had to go round to get in by the back door. He roused a little and went out into the passage, where he fell off again. One man in the lower ward, a Swede and a thoroughly nice man, paralysed in the leg by being crushed between cars, had not had his bed made for a month, and though he cannot stand, has to drag himself to the washstand yards off, if he washes. He is ill with depression seeing no one all day.

'Upstairs, six typhoid cases lay in a row, all of different nations – Norwegian, Scotch Canadian, Swede, Finlander, Austrian, German Swiss. They lie in a bath of perspiration and never have the damp clothes dried or changed. I dry their pillow-slips for them, and they say it is lovely. Yesterday, as the man had come home tipsy nothing had been done in their ward. . . . I did what was possible for them in fear and trembling lest the old doctor, who is only a dentist, should catch me nursing them at all, but if he scolds I shall be obliged to say what I think.

'Then I sang to them as many different songs of different tongues as I could think of, ending with a German song of Mendelssohn's which delighted the German Swiss. . . . I have set on foot a scheme for a City Library and Reading room, for all creeds and all nationalities, thinking something of the sort sorely wanted. I called on all the Ministers and asked them to co-operate, which they gladly agreed to do, each felt it a need, and we met several times at my house, then called a meeting in the City, and agreed to start collecting. Of course I was one of the Collectors, for they thought I should get more being a woman, and I gathered \$200 in a few days. So I hope the institution will soon take shape as a permanent benefit to the town. This collecting has kept me on my legs a good deal and brought me into contact with a number of men, who have shown me much civility and afforded me much amusement. Mr. Rockefeller gave me \$100 at once. He is wealthy and owner of one of the mines close by, but his brother is *the* wealthiest man in the States.'

To her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite.

'October 24th, 1895

'We had a walk yesterday; it was rather more than we bargained for. About $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the worst walking you can conceive, through a forest trail. Mary fell down a good many times, en route, but enjoyed the novelty. We met one or two men at the outskirts of the bush, who told me it was impossible for me to go there, but having by this time learnt that what is impossible to an American woman is not to an English,

I replied that at least I would go on till I found for myself the impossibilities spoken of.

'We did not find them and got at last to the Camp. Two log huts, one for cooking and eating, the other with bunks, like a large cabin for sleeping, about 50 men living there till spring comes. They looked much surprised at the apparition of two females, but were civil and friendly. The foreman showed us over the Camp and offered us refreshment. The yearning for tea was too great to be refused spite of not very appetising surroundings. We were introduced to the *French* cook who gets \$50 a month for his services, not bad wages – and he prepared a "lunch" for us. It was hard work not to laugh. The cups were battered tin basins – no saucers – no milk – tea very raw and cooked – but oh! I was glad of it. Hot cakes of various sorts – altogether not bad. When refreshed, the Foreman kindly undertook to show us another way home, by what they call a logging road. Unfortunately the sun began to set. The man was evidently anxious about us, indeed, they invited us to stay the night! But when he had walked about half-way with us, I insisted on his going back, and assured him, with his directions, we should find the way.

'That I am now writing in my own house, shows that we eventually did – but not till after we had experienced the novel and not altogether agreeable sensation of being utterly lost in the dark in a forest. The moon got up and was friendly and we struggled on knee deep in bog, often ankle deep in icy water, tumbling over logs and stumps, climbing, crossing creeks by fallen trees and at last felt our way to a disused railway track

and then, walking on sleepers was comparatively pleasant and easy.'

To her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite:

'November 12th, 1895

'Nearly all the executive business of the Library falls on me and keeps me on the trot running after dilatory and procrastinating storekeepers and business men. I am weary of striving with such a stiff-necked and gain-saying people, and the ladies! Oh dear. The many offers they made me of help in everything I did. So I inaugurated a union of them – mapped out the work – gave each a portion – and then, the last meeting they were to come and bring their report. They came, having done exactly "*Nothing!*" There's no work in them at all, and yet they get up early in the morning! . . . Last Sunday I was preaching in a lumber camp. A glorious crisp morning, clear and sparkling, the woods like a paradise of beauty. Judge Eaton's son drove me out in a sleigh; I was glad to be saved the walk. We drove right across the lake and plunged into the bush through the ice road. When we got there the men were all out in the bright sunshine washing their clothes. Pete Peterson, a charming young Swede I had visited in hospital – was there – a friend at court, beaming upon me. The French cook was making pies, but he stopped and blew his horn to summon them all to the service. About 40 came in – all who could understand English. They fastened their eyes on me and were absolutely attentive. I could have spoken for hours, and we sang – or I did to them.

'No words can tell you how good the men are to me,

I am afraid, and feel I must not stay too long. Just to go down that main street, and see all the hard icy faces melt before me is wonderful. They say the vilest wretch in town feels it and respects me. Why, I cannot explain. Only I know, I need no revolver, I bear a sort of hallowed life among them. But a while since and it was not safe to walk in the streets here with a dollar in your pocket, and no revolver. . . . Have you heard of our Temperance Meeting? It was splendid, nearly all men. I got the *Mayor to come*. . . . I was wrought up to a tremendous pitch, and spoke as I did not know I could. We were all carried away. The Union had a grand start and daily more drunkards sign. I never go out without a bundle of pledge cards and a pencil.

To her sister-in-law, Mrs. L. T. Hobhouse:

‘November 16th, 1895

‘My work here grows more complicated and difficult. Mr. . . . has arrived. He is the new parson come to live between Tower and Virginia and work both towns. He sat in my room and scolded me for one hour by the clock for all the work I am doing and intend doing. . . . He thoughtfully told me I should baulk all his work in Virginia, and only appears to find relief in the thought that I should vanish with the Spring. . . . He did not think St. Paul would approve of my holding mission services in a log camp. I said I should do it all the same.

‘He said the Public Library was a terrible mistake, because the Church would not get the prestige.

‘I said I thought it a very good and necessary thing,

and it didn't matter who got the prestige, as long as a need was supplied.

'He said of course I should shut it on Sunday.

'I said I should open it the whole day.

'I said I was going to start Temperance work for all sorts and creeds. He said he was going to start a Church Temperance only.

'He said all dissenters were wicked. I said a great many were very earnest men.

'He said then I cannot count upon your help – I said "I cannot work on such narrow lines in such a place as this." I stood up stiff. He bowed himself out, praying I might not do much harm but fearing I should.'

To her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite:

'December 4th, 1895

'I dined in odd company – far away in the Bush with two strange men in a paper shanty. I went to ask the owners of the shanty to sign the pledge, he having sent word he wanted to right away. He was not at home, but I found his chum and the teamster. The "chum" is an outcast – he was awfully pleasant, took me all round, showed me the footprints in the snow of all the different creatures, – deer, rabbits, squirrels, chipmunk, weasel, mouse, minks, etc.; how to tell the different trees, and to get gum from the balsam, and hunt the moose in the dark upon the lake.

'When he heard I had come on temperance, he tore the paper from my hands, saying "quick, quick, let me sign it," and did so without delay. A thoroughly well-educated man, he took me out alone through the

silent snow-covered trees and said he must tell me all his story, a ghastly one — morphia, whisky, ruin, divorce, attempted suicide, gambling and murder. There he was, self-sentenced to a lonely bush life, thoughts of the past confronting him; when too maddening he would throw down the saw, and seize the gun and so forth. He cooked the dinner, and we three sat down; it was the hardest work I ever had to eat a meal. Then I came back and ran the other man to earth in a loft over a blacksmith's shop, where he signed too with the rafters for witnesses.'

To her Aunt, Lady Hobhouse:

'December 8th, 1895

'People are very good to me, I find strange offerings at my door-step sometimes, — a rabbit prepared for cooking, — a bundle of green from the woods, — a sack of potatoes, etc., indeed I am to be kept in potatoes all the winter gratis by two men who batch, and all next summer in green food, if I will promise to stay. There's a load of wood coming in from a grateful drunkard in the Bush. They certainly are most open-handed.'

From a letter to her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite:

'VIRGINIA,

'January 2nd, 1896

Speaking of a meeting she was to address, when she was very unwell.

'I knew I had to address a crowd of men. For nearly a week I had not been able to speak much above a

whisper. The Hall was full, it holds nearly 300, and almost all men, only a sprinkling of women, and just before my speech all the business men came down and filled it till there was not standing room, and as soon as I had finished they went away again. I had prepared my address very carefully, but I had neither mind nor voice, so it was a great effort. They listen wonderfully. If it is known I am going to open my mouth the men all come. It is a dreadful position to be in. I gave it to them so hot last night that I almost fear to walk down the street this morning.

'The dear Finns were there, so proud to play their band for us. Fancy 25 Finns playing brass instruments *all* out of tune. They wanted to play 6 times for me, but I assured them we would not think of troubling them for more than 3 selections.'

From letter to the same.

'VIRGINIA,

'February 15th, 1896

'On February 22nd, Washington's birthday, is to be a big Temperance meeting, and I am in the throes of preparing a rather outspoken and thoroughgoing speech. Even Americans themselves say that to enthuse an American audience is a very difficult thing. They are perfectly quiet, calm, cold and critical—never say "hear, hear" or "No, No," like an English audience—the atmosphere is like a Minnesota frost. It is the same with singing to them. I sang to a hall full of Finns last week, so different, I quite enjoyed it, they were enthusiastic like a Cornish audience.'

To her sister.

'August 8th, 1896

'Oh, the heat. Fancy from 90 to 100 in the shade and a small house with never a tree or shrub anyways near, and two bedrooms with four occupants, one of whom is a man, and one a typhoid patient. This has been my position this week, and add to this the flies, the grasshoppers, and the hornibugs. . . . However, all goes well and my patient is mending. . . . She was taken ill, her husband just gone to Dakota, and not a soul to nurse or befriend her in a dirty, bug-haunted saloon inn, so I got a buggy and brought her up here to nurse.'

But the work was not to continue uninterruptedly for very long. On the one hand business became very bad; owing to contentions between the furnace and iron mine companies a deadlock resulted and all the great iron mines were closed, with the result that the miners drifted away to other parts. The accumulation of difficulties were thus summed up in a letter from Lord Hobhouse:

'CHARLTON,

'20.9.1896

'It does seem as if your plans were time after time broken up by malignant or unexpected circumstances. If we rightly understand, the Cornish Colony was found to consist of other people, principally Scandinavians; the Church organization which you leaned on to support you, has proved a broken reed, more apt to pierce you; the public hospital changed into a private one which did not relish new methods; your faithful Cornish follower has proved fickle; and now

the very fabric of the community is melting away and leaving not a wrack behind.'

On the other hand, an engagement to be married, finally broken off after more than two years, brought great happiness, great uncertainties and perplexities, and alas! very great suffering. It also brought a new and interesting experience, for as it was intended to make a home in Mexico, Emily Hobhouse, finding that her fiancé could not go, with characteristic determination, went herself alone to Mexico to make the necessary investigations.

The Community at Virginia had appreciated her fearless work and were loath to let her go. 'It was quite hard work leaving Virginia,' she writes:

'The Band came up at 7.30 a.m. and played me all down the street and up the hill to the station, and played round the window of my car till the train moved out, and lots of people came up too, to see me off.'

After paying a visit to friends in Ohio, Emily Hobhouse set out alone for the long journey to Mexico, armed with one or two introductions to friends of her fiancé. But luck was with her to begin with, as she tells in the following letters, and her introduction to Mexico was under happy circumstances.

'It so happened that 3,000 doctors were assembling this week in Mexico in Congress, coming from all parts of the Continent, and this had the disadvantage of crowding the trains and filling the hotels, but on the other hand I fell in (in our Pullman) with a Dr. Hamilton and his wife from Pittsburgh; a dear old

man he is and a surgeon of eminence in his state, and five consecutive days in the car made us very friendly. At the end they insisted on my attaching myself to them as their daughter during their stay in Mexico. . . . Consequently I had to wear a badge as belonging to one of the doctors, and came in for all the honour and glory of the reception festivities prepared for them. It was indeed fortunate for me, because the hotels were so crowded, I should hardly have stood a chance for rooms – as it was on our arrival we were met by the Vice-President of the Convention and his Señora, placed in their private carriage and driven by a splendid pair of cream-coloured horses through this lovely city under a brilliant moon.'

From Mexico City, to her sister, Mrs. Hebblethwaite:

'November 20th, 1896

'First we had a grand opening reception in the Opera House affording us a chance to admire the dark-eyed Spanish belles who thronged the boxes – but they are all so alike with such sameness of colour and dull expressions that I can't get up much admiration for them. The Opera House was profusely decked with rare and beautiful flowers hung from top to bottom, relieved with palm branches and festooned with flags – a copy of the famous Aztec stone filled the back of the stage and Aztec idols of hugh proportions grinned at us from the flowery background. President Diaz was present, in plain evening dress, only with the Mexican colours across his breast. He is a *finé*-looking man and justly popular – trying as he does to improve and develop the country in every way

by a progressive policy. . . . Yesterday we were entertained with almost royal splendour at Chapultapec, the Mexican White House, by the President and Mrs. Diaz. A long avenue of Eucalyptus trees leads from the town to the castle, which is built upon a mass of rock, rising out of the tableland, and commanding a view, which is, I suppose, unrivalled in this world. We were received by the President and his wife in a saloon opening on to a marble-paved piazza, broad enough to accommodate hundreds of guests, and after roaming below were invited to a still higher piazza where a long banquet table was spread, and the columns and walls and balconies and staircases were wreathed and hung with rare and lovely flowers. . . . The grounds are still adorned with great hoary cedars which were big trees in poor Montezuma's days, and altogether I was haunted by all the sadness of the past which seems to hang about this town and neighbourhood, and the wretched condition of the poor Indians who throng the streets keep it all before one's mind, and one cannot forget.'

After this happy beginning, however, the difficulties increased. Emily Hobhouse's fiancé was quite unable to leave Minnesota, where business conditions were going from bad to worse, and unaided, she purchased a ranch, and arranged for building a 'real' house on it, one, i.e. with wooden floors, and glass windows, despite which unheard-of luxuries the cost was only to be £80. Months of cruel uncertainty passed; many of them she spent alone in Mexico city, studying the language and history, sketching, finding out about the prospects of the country, and in the hope of

getting an assured income, she was persuaded into the purchase of a speculative concession. She went back to the States at least once, during which visit she writes of an appalling experience. Leaving Chicago, after a few hours visit to her fiancé:

'It was a terrible journey, because we had not long left Chicago before the engine exploded, and with a mighty crash the cars were brought to a sudden stand, and the air was full of flying things. I saw the body of the engine driver hurled aloft cutting through the thick mass of telegraph wires, and falling, a dissevered body in an adjacent field. At the door of our car lay the stoker, a charred corpse. Of the massive engine nothing was left but a few ribbons of twisted iron. Mercifully, no passenger was hurt, only our nerves were jarred, and we lived through much in an instant of time.'

This whole period of her life was one of strain, greatly increased by her lonely position and the isolation from her friends and relations, who could not enter fully into her problems and perplexities, and whose inability always to advise upon or support her decisions caused her acute unhappiness.¹ Twice she believed that her marriage was imminent, but twice the hoped for happiness was denied her. She returned to England in 1897 for a time, but in 1898 she made another journey to Mexico, accompanied by a cousin. They sailed by St. Thomas, Colon, Kingston, Tampico and Vera Cruz to Mexico, and found the voyage full of interest—or rather the visits on land at these different places.

¹ For, though divided from her relatives in many of her opinions, she yet had a very strong family feeling and affection.

Of Colon, Emily Hobhouse writes:

‘Though told by every one that we should not do so, A. and I managed to enjoy our 36 hours at Colon very much indeed. Of course it is a miserable little town, or village rather, of frame houses, very shabby, but we thought the entourage very pretty. The coco-nut palms were handsome, groves and avenues of them varied by bananas and mangroves – the sea a lovely colour, across the harbour a long line of wooded hills, and behind the town a distant range of high mountains. We found an English Church with a black congregation, which we were glad to attend. . . . The only interest to the place is the arrival of the ships, so we were hailed with delight by the English Consul and the agents, doctor, etc. . . . We gleaned a little European news at Colon, but the telegrams are somewhat scanty. The war scare between Spain and the U.S.A. the chief excitement, and if, as some conjecture, Mexico should side with Spain, it would be a bad look-out for our prospects. But I hope it will all blow over.’

Landing at Vera Cruz they had a very fine mountain journey to Mexico City, rising to about 7,000 feet.

The result of her journey was that her engagement was finally ended, and instead of a home of her own in the fascinating surroundings of Mexico, Emily Hobhouse returned to England, where before very long the grim task of work under war conditions in South Africa called her from dreams of her own happiness to the stern reality of work for others. As was natural to a woman of such a highly emotional temperament, this grave disappointment left an indelible mark.

On her return to England, Emily Hobhouse took up work with the Women's Industrial Council, and while living in a flat in Chelsea she first came into close touch with Mr. and Mrs. (afterwards Lord and Lady) Courtney, who were to remain intimate lifelong friends, and whose support in her South African work was wellnigh indispensable to her. But her life was very hard, for owing to commitments unwisely entered into in Mexico, her means were greatly straitened, yet her intense reserve allowed no one to know of it, and she suffered actual hunger rather than accept any help from her relations.

But there were happy interludes, including her visits to Lord and Lady Hobhouse, and in the winter, a delightful visit to Switzerland. This was taken with her brother, the Courtneys and other friends, and, despite the shadow of the war, they were able for the time to throw care aside and enter heartily into the pleasures of winter sports and good company, so that Emily looked back upon it as one of the few real holidays of her life. Very fortunate it was, for the coming days were to need all her strength and courage and left no room for pleasure.

CHAPTER III

OUTBREAK OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

1899

WAR between Great Britain and the Boer Republics was declared on the 11th October 1899, ending the unfortunate discussions which had been going on for so long. This is no place for a history of the origins of the war, but the point of view of Emily Hobhouse, and the circle of those commonly and erroneously called 'Pro-Boers,' may be briefly indicated. To such thinkers the following were the cogent facts. The Transvaal, a little state of 30,000 burghers whose mentality was more akin to that of the seventeenth century than that of the nineteenth, was cursed with the possession of rich gold-mines, which attracted foreigners with a totally different outlook on life, who felt little but scorn for the stolid, evangelically-minded Boers. In 1895 the Uitlanders (foreigners) formed a majority of the population, so that it was not unnatural that they should desire a considerable share in the management of the country. On the other hand, the Boers realized that they themselves would retain no power at all if they conceded all that was asked, and they were not anxious to remedy the grievances which were complained of. The attempt to force them to do so by the foolish and flagrant invasion of their country known as the Jameson Raid shook their confidence in British intentions to its very foundations and must be held responsible for much that happened after it. The following year the Boers

increased their expenditure on armaments from £87,708 to £495,618,¹ an outward sign of the increase in their suspicions which were further strengthened by the light punishment meted out to the Jameson Raiders. No doubt the Uitlanders had genuine grievances, but there is strong ground for believing that persistent friendly pressure would have succeeded in removing them gradually, where high-handed bluster failed. This view was held not only by those opposed to all war, but by many moderate thinkers.

The details of the negotiations of 1899 between the two Governments are too many and too complicated to be entered into here. But so well known an authority as Mr. J. A. Hobson may be quoted, who in a very careful examination of the documents on both sides² says, after referring to Kruger's offer of an extended franchise to Sir A. Milner at Bloemfontein, 'Had the policy . . . of a settlement upon a franchise basis been adhered to, there is every reason to believe that the peace could have been kept. Had Great Britain been willing to submit all other outstanding differences to arbitration, the peace could have been kept. . . . It is of urgent importance to understand that Great Britain steadfastly set her face against arbitration as a full mode of settlement.'

After the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference between Kruger and Milner reserves were called out in England and troops sent to South Africa. Such an attitude was calculated to rouse the strongest antagonism in the proud, independent Boer nature, and it was hardly strange that they should answer with their so-called ultimatum of 9th October asking

¹ J. A. Hobson, *War in South Africa*, p. 128.

² *op. cit.*, p. 168.

that 'all points of mutual difference should be regulated by the friendly course of arbitration; and that Great Britain should withdraw her troops from the borders and cease to land and push forward other troops.'¹ That such a tiny state should pit her strength against the resources of the British Empire was mad from every point of view. At all events she desired the advantage of beginning before those resources could be fully collected.

The influence of Lord Hobhouse on his niece, in forming a judgment about the ethics of the war, was undoubtedly very great and we cannot do better than quote a passage he wrote at the time, to a journalist, which may be taken to express succinctly Emily's own view.

'If you can make people see that a nation does not become great by increasing the number of its subjects without regard to quality or proximity, that extension of dominion by military force brings weakness and not strength; that peace cannot be had except by scrupulous observance of justice and moderation towards the weak as well as the strong; that to insist on having our own way means war; that patriotism is the readiness of man to sacrifice himself for his country and not his readiness to exalt his country at the expense of others; that the truest and bravest patriots are those who dare to warn their countrymen when hurrying in ignorance or passion to do wrong; that to support one's country in ill-doing is as selfish as to support his family or friends or party in ill-doing; that precisely the same moral laws and sanctions apply to nations as to the individuals who compose them . . . that to do as one

¹ J. A. Hobson, *War in South Africa*, p. 182.

would be done by is the golden rule for all, whether acting in multitudes or singly; that to admit an error and to make reparation for a wrong is just as wise for a nation as for a man; that large armaments are a serious danger to the nation that creates them; that those who take away the liberty of others are on the highway to lose their own; that free thought and speech are, with occasional friction and inconvenience, the very life-blood of mankind without which they dwindle into insignificance . . . if these maxims are made more acceptable by your agency, you may when your work is done lie down to rest with the assurance that it is good.'

With this outlook it was no wonder that Emily Hobhouse was filled with horror at the war and with grief that England should have failed – as it seemed to her – to act up to the high standard every lover of his country desires.

Pity for a country which she felt was being thus bullied by her own and belief that the clearing up of many misunderstandings between the two nations would pave the way to peace, induced her to throw herself at once into the work of the South African Conciliation Committee, a body formed with the endeavour to bring unbiassed facts about South Africa to the notice of the English public. Numbers of people in Cape Colony whose ties with the two Republics were intimate were shocked and grieved beyond words at the conduct of England, and were anxious to do all they could to become links between the two countries. Emily Hobhouse undertook to act as Honorary Secretary of a women's branch of the Committee, work which was interrupted by a

visit to Italy in the early spring of 1900 to accompany and look after an Indian friend whose health necessitated a change. She writes:

‘During these weeks, Miss E. D. Bradby – always a tower of strength in this cause – kindly took my place on the Women’s Branch and continued to organize our methods of work, drawing-room meetings, discussion groups and instruction classes. Before going to Italy my aunt helped our Branch by giving a drawing-room meeting at which Mr. Cronwright Schreiner spoke. He had also spoken at the Liberal Conference with excellent effect. His visit to England had done much to keep us in touch with Colonial opinion, and many other South African families that came and went brought vivid accounts of the intensity of feeling in the Cape Colony and the unsettling effects which would follow annexation. This feeling was by no means confined to the Dutch; it was shared by many of English name, including the editor of the *South African News*. Studying old documents and papers is to realize once again the passion of indignation felt by a considerable section of our country at the threat of annexation. Many who had taken the war lightly or even willingly as far as to give the Boers a beating, paused before the injustice of annexation. “Self Determination” was not in fashion with our statesmen then. We longed to protest, and it occurred to me that women, at least, might make a public protest without arousing undue criticism. The idea came to me at a small dinner-party given by Mr. Courtney’s sister, Mrs. Oliver, at her house in Collingham Gardens. The dinner was of a

private nature, only old Miss Williams and myself besides the Courtneys and our hosts. The coming Annexation was discussed and deplored and when the obstacles to a general protest were dealt with and felt to be overwhelming, I, as Honorary Secretary of the Women's Branch of the South African Conciliation Committee, proposed that we, the *women*, should hold a Meeting of Protest. To my great joy, but considerable surprise, Mr. Courtney agreed in principle to this proposal. I pressed home the plan. Later, as Miss Williams kindly drove me home in her carriage with the Courtneys to Chelsea, this proposal and agreement to it were definitely repeated. Thus backed, I carried the idea to our next Women's Committee and urged it there with success. A date, June the 13th, was fixed, and resolving to do it on a large scale as a Demonstration of real importance, the Queen's Hall was secured. From that moment my flat in Chelsea became organizing headquarters and with the devoted help of Miss Anna Griffin we began on May the 1st the arduous work of preparation. We formed, of course, branches throughout London with excellent workers, but even so, six weeks is scant time for filling the Queen's Hall with women only and all the drawbacks of an unpopular subject in time of war. There was immense opposition to contend with and the "Conciliation" attitude to be always maintained. The great bulk of the correspondence fell on Miss Griffin and we laboured from 8 a.m. to — often — 11 p.m. for those six weeks. The result was a magnificent assemblage of women, representative not only of London but of the entire country, for it was attended by the Delegates of the Women's

Liberal Federation which happened to be holding its meetings at that time.'

At Lady Courtney's request William Watson wrote a sonnet for the occasion, in which these lines occur:

'Yet being brave, being women, you will speak
The thought that must be spoken without fear.
The voice of chivalry is faint; the note
Of patriotism is well-nigh overborne.
For what is patriotism but noble care
For our own country's honour in men's eyes.' . . .

'Free admission to the Hall was decided on by the Committee, but only by bearers of tickets supplied by me. There was need of this caution in those days. Besides, it was to be a purely Women's Meeting, and as a matter of fact *no* men were present, except, it was said, the organ blower! I recall with amusement Mr. Courtney's keen wish to be present and how he begged me for a ticket, but there was the strict prohibition of men. . . . We had great fun over this little plot, for plot it was, as he was determined to be there and continued to beg me secretly for a ticket. I was adamant as regards allowing him into the hall, but on his solemn promise that he would come no further than the corridor and be content to listen behind the curtain, I eventually gave way. I well remember catching sight of the fine dome of his head against the red portière just as I was making my own speech, and how nervous it made me. Below¹ are the resolutions passed with, I

1

RESOLUTION I

That this meeting of women brought together from all parts of the United Kingdom condemns the unhappy war now raging in South Africa, as mainly

believe, only one dissentient, and that feeble voice was, by some accounts, a baby's cry! The speeches were on a high level. But none spoke with such lofty eloquence as did Mrs. Scott, the wife of the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. Hers was indeed a noble utterance.

I was not amongst the list of distinguished women who were the published speakers, but when it was finally resolved to append the 4th resolution it fell to me to propose it. It chimed in with my feelings and formed the keynote of my life and thoughts for years to come. And now, in old age, the tables are turned and the women of the two former Republics think with sympathy of me in my weakness and constantly, by word and deed, show that they never forget. Amongst the many sins and iniquities which were at that time

due to the bad policy of the Government:—a policy which has already cost in killed, wounded and missing over 20,000 of our bravest soldiers, and the expenditure of millions of money drawn from the savings and toil of our people, while to the two small states with whom we are at war, it is bringing utter ruin and desolation.

RESOLUTION II

That this meeting protests against the attempt to silence, by disorder and violence, all freedom of speech about, or criticism of, the Government policy.

RESOLUTION III

That this meeting protests against any settlement which involves the extinction by force of two Republics whose inhabitants, allied to us in blood and religion, cling as passionately to their separate nationality and flag as we in this country do to ours.

RESOLUTION IV

That this meeting desires to express its sympathy with the women of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and begs them to remember that thousands of English women are filled with profound sorrow at the thought of their sufferings, and with deep regret for the action of their own Government.

attributed to our Boer enemies was that of ingratitude. We must all testify as we know and I can only say that the overflowing gratitude shown to me by the mass of the Boer people, thousands of whom have never even seen me, must be almost, if not quite unique. It would be impossible to sum up the instances. Apart from the touching presentation of a little house in which they wished me to end my days in comfort and to the gift of which many thousands contributed, even now, a quarter of a century after my work for them, every year brings me a birthday gift in the form of a box of their delicious farm products sent me in rotation by one after another of the little country towns of the Free State. I call this my "Wonder Box," and truly it has all the character and charm of a fairy gift. Indeed it is one of the leading characteristics of a Boer that he never forgets a kind deed or a kindly word. But this is a digression.¹

'Miss Griffin and I had toiled for six weeks from eight in the morning till eleven and often later at night to prepare this vast gathering, and it was an undoubted

[¹ This annual present to Emily Hobhouse was organized by her friend Mrs. Steyn. Each year a collection of South African products was made in a different district. In one year, e.g. amongst other delicacies were sent an iced birthday cake, more than fifty pots of jam and 40 lb. of dried fruits.

The present of £2,300 for the purchase of a home for herself was mainly collected in such small sums as half-crowns, also through the instrumentality of Mrs. Steyn. It was especially emphasized that this must be used for the purpose mentioned, and not given away in relief to German children, then occupying all her energies.

Both these were very remarkable expressions of Boer gratitude and fulfilled their kind donors' wishes by a real alleviation of the difficulties of life. The ease and dignity conferred by a house of her own cannot be lightly estimated.]

success. Many had criticised it on the score of its uselessness for practical results. I had put this point before Mr. Courtney who replied that even when nothing practical could result it was always well to register calm, combined *protest* against injustice. It is, I feel, also well that the two former Republics should know, as a matter of history, that we women did do so.¹

'It was shortly after this, early in July, that I went down to Liskeard with Mr. Lloyd George to speak at a meeting. Liskeard is in Cornwall, about four miles from my old home. The Meeting, under the auspices of the Women's Branch of the South African Conciliation Committee, was organized locally mainly by the Quakers of the vicinity. Mr. Quiller Couch (now Sir Arthur), the distinguished Cornish author, was chairman. We needed one with tact and patience, and he had both, but even he could not cope with the planned and prepared rowdyism which disgraced Liskeard that day. Not one of us was allowed really to deliver a speech. Some never uttered a word. The hall was crowded – and round about the platform were thronging friends of my childhood, people who had walked in from St. Ives to see and hear me once more. Their tears fell as the mob of roughs howled us down. These finally stormed the platform, hurling forms and chairs at our heads. Mr. Lloyd George spoke no syllable.

¹ The meeting had a good platform and the support of a long list of distinguished prominent names. Indeed, the *Westminster Gazette* characterized it as 'one of the most remarkable Women's meetings which have been held in London for a very long time. . . . The speeches were brief, excellent and to the point, and the tone of the meeting enthusiastic in the extreme.'

When it was over we all felt the relief of people who have given due vent to their feelings.

He who could so have charmed! I can see him now, facing the storm, erect, courageous, but stern and absolutely mute. We stood our ground for an hour till indeed it was no longer prudent; then finally as the missiles flew there was no alternative but to retreat into the green-room at the back of the platform. There the organizing Committee received us with streaming eyes and shamed apologies for their town. They hurried us across the open parade to our hotel before the hostile crowd could issue from the hall. And it was well. The bad feeling was especially directed toward Mr. Lloyd George, and I admired his cool courage throughout the evening. We were told that all sorts of wild tales had been deliberately circulated to work up feeling against him. How little they dreamed, those passion-blinded people of Liskeard, that the man they would not hear would one day lead the country! I find among my papers the little account of his expenses to Cornwall. He wrote: "I very much regret that the Committee should get so little for their money, but I am sure you will admit that that was no fault of mine! Better luck next time." Mr. Quiller Couch summed up the essence of the affair in a very dignified letter to the *Western Morning News* which proved unanswerable. Liskeard was the stronghold of Mr. Courtney's constituency and the hope that this meeting might do good to his political chances was thus quenched; it probably did harm; at any rate another candidate was selected and the seat lost.

'For me this meeting and several others at which I spoke during the summer, were followed by a storm of abuse from relatives and acquaintances, some of whom

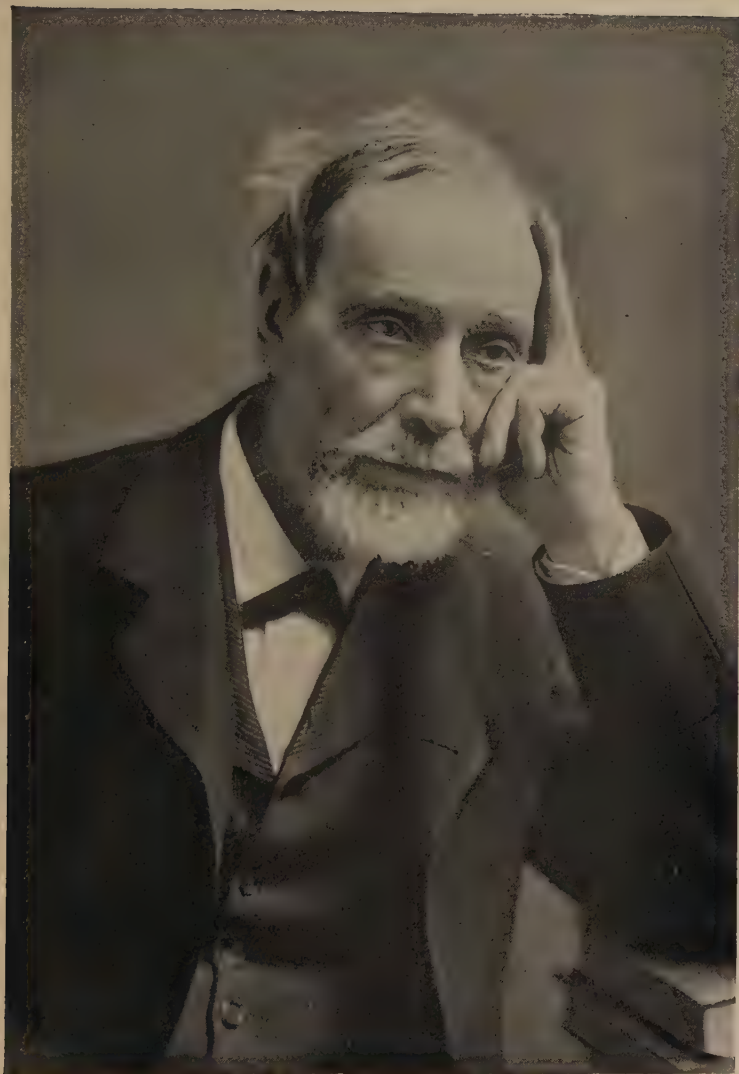
even attacked me in the Press. I lost the majority of the friends of my girlhood, and it was a great loss. There was a divergence of principle at that time which broke many a bond, and taking up the work publicly I could not escape a painful severance of old ties. Some compensation there has been in the closeness of many new friendships then formed, yet these later ones lack some precious qualities that seem to belong only to the ties made in youth.

'In her quiet room in Bruton Street my old aunt awaited with unfailing sympathy and interest the result of the Cornish meeting. She was disappointed. She felt so keenly the folly and disgrace of these exhibitions of passion and rowdyism. In these days she had been led to parody Rudyard Kipling's fine Recessional in these terms:

'For we, with Empire drunk, let loose
Wild tongues to shout, base pens to write,
Slanders and lies and boasts to use
That stir the blood, that rouse the fight,
God of all men – condemn us not.
We have forgot – we have forgot.

For heathen hearts that put their trust
In heaps of gold, in hosts of men,
To friends untrue, to foes unjust,
In quest of England's seeming gain;
For ruthless deed, for vengeful word,
Have mercy on our people, Lord.'

'The Executive of the South African Conciliation Committee maintained continual correspondence with our



LORD HOBHOUSE

About 1900

fellow-subjects, the leaders of thought and action in the Cape Colony, as well as with well-known South Africans who visited England on and off during that year. . . . Feeling in the Cape Colony had found its first deep expression in the People's Congress at Graaff-Reinet, May 31st, that year. This representative gathering under the impression, largely correct, that the English people were misinformed or ignorant of the real state of affairs and feelings at the Cape, decided to send Delegates to England. To use their own words: "These delegates shall go from us, the People, to the People of Great Britain and Ireland . . . to tell the simple truth as they know it concerning the real facts of the South African situation." A more sensible plan could not have been proposed, only it should have been done a year sooner. As is known, this great Congress was followed by some twenty others throughout the Colony, and while these were passing similar resolutions the Deputation from Graaff-Reinet took ship and reached London in the second week of July. They were joined on arrival by the Rev. Moorrees of the Paarl. We welcomed them most heartily, hoping if they could get a hearing their message delivered with such pathetic simplicity might reach the hearts, if not the heads, of England. I well remember how lost these good men seemed in our big London in the midst of the gay and crowded season, coming from the space and solitude of their land; and though, too, coming from a warmer climate how incapable of standing the oppressive heat of a London July! Professor de Vos was leader of the deputation and his saintly bearing and old-world dignity made a deep impression. He resembled some

prophet of old. My aunt had a large drawing-room meeting to meet and listen to them. It was a lovely day and very hot. The afternoon wore on and the Delegates did not appear. The guests were arriving and the packed rooms growing oppressive. Anxiety grew, so asking someone to fill the gap by an improvised address, I hastily hailed a hansom and dashed across London to find the delinquents. They were in their boarding-house having quite forgotten day, hour and place! I bundled Professor de Vos into the cab, and entreating the others to follow as soon as they had changed their coats, which they pleaded hard to do, I drove the one I had caught at fullest speed back to Bruton Street where the guests awaited him. Alas! we had no rapid taxis in those days. He, fortunately, was able to fill the time till his colleagues appeared. Few will forget his impressive words and prophetic mien. Unperturbed by the unseemly hurry to which I had subjected him, he delivered the message entrusted to him by his compatriots with calm and dignity, speaking with closed eyes and folded hands as though in prayer. He seemed to have stepped out of the Old Testament into our modern garish life. But the people of Great Britain as a whole did not want or welcome these messengers from the people of their Colony of the Cape. Though much trouble was taken to prepare meetings for them, few were the places and few the people who would lend them an ear. Manchester and one or two other towns gave them a fair reception, but these could not atone for the general indifference. Wherever he was seen and heard Professor de Vos made a deep impression and Mr. Moorrees did valiant

work with an eloquence which was as rich and moving in English as in Dutch. During the summer he spoke in the West of England, and while I was with my aunt and uncle in their country retreat in Somersetshire Mr. Moorrees spent a night or two with us. Much work and correspondence fell to my share in preparing these meetings for him.'

CHAPTER IV

FARM-BURNING IN THE BOER REPUBLICS

1900

WE must now turn to the progress of the war in South Africa, news of which had such a profound influence on Emily Hobhouse's life.

As early as the 3rd of February 1900, Presidents Kruger and Steyn protested to the British as follows:

'We learn from many sides that the British troops, contrary to the recognized usages of war, are guilty of the destruction by burning and blowing up with dynamite of farm-houses, of the devastation of farms and the goods therein, whereby unprotected women and children are often deprived of food and cover . . . We wish earnestly to protest against such acts.'¹

Two days later Lord Roberts replied:

'CAPE TOWN, *Feb. 5*, 1900

'I beg to acknowledge your Honours' telegram charging the British troops with the destruction of property contrary to the recognized usages of war, and with brigandage and devastation. These charges are made in vague and general terms. No specific case is mentioned, and no evidence given. . . . The most stringent instructions have been issued to the British troops to

¹ Cmd. 8582, (190) Bloemfontein, Feb. 3, 1900.

respect private property, as far as is compatible with the conduct of military operations. All wanton destruction or injury to peaceful inhabitants is contrary to British practice and tradition, and will if necessary be rigorously suppressed by me.'

After some, also vague, counter-charges, the despatch ends with reiterating the desire of the British Government and of Lord Roberts himself, that the war should be conducted with 'as little injury as possible to peaceable inhabitants and to private property, and I hope your Honours will exercise your authority to ensure its being conducted in a similar spirit on your side.'

The correspondence was continued in the same strain, without the least effect. Each side asserted its perfect innocence and charged the other with indefensible actions. But this, at least, appears from the extracts quoted; that Lord Roberts agreed to the principle that 'wanton destruction or injury to peaceful inhabitants is contrary to British practice.' By 'peaceful inhabitants' he may be taken to mean non-combatant women and children.

The burning of farms, a practice which increased greatly as time went on, seems hardly to tally with this principle.¹

Doubtless the military argument is that such destruction was a military necessity, but it is a very dangerous argument for those who maintain the feasibility of restrictions at once humane and effective on methods of warfare.

In this case, however, the means used seem to have been out of proportion to the end, for Lord Kitchener is reported to have said privately in 1901, 'We are now carrying on the war to put two or three hundred Dutchmen in prison at the

¹ See Appendix for extracts from Hague Convention of 1899.

end of it. It seems absurd and wrong, and I wonder the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not have a fit.¹

The Government return (Cmd. 524) gives most frequently as reasons for the burning of farms, 'harbouring Boers,' 'laying waste country used as base by enemy,' as well as damage done to railway or telegraph lines in the vicinity. There is considerable evidence that reasons were not always waited for and that, especially in later days, the destruction was entirely indiscriminate. It will be well to give a few descriptions from eye-witnesses of what occurred. One of the earliest is by Mr. Filson Young, author of *The Relief of Mafeking*.²

'DRY HARTS SIDING, May 8

'The burning of houses that has gone on this afternoon has been a most unpleasant business. We have been marching through a part of the country where some mischievous person has been collecting and encouraging insurgents, and this afternoon, in the course of about ten miles, we have burned no fewer than six farm-houses. Care seems to have been taken that there was proper evidence against the absent owner, and in no case were people actually burned out of their homes; but in one most melancholy case the wife of an insurgent, who was lying sick at a friend's farm, watched from her sick husband's bedside the burning of her home a hundred yards away. I cannot think that punishment need take this wild form; it seems as though a kind of domestic murder were being committed while one

¹ Prof. Eric Walker's *History of South Africa* (Longmans Green, 1928), p. 496, quoted from Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, II, 26.

² Quoted in *The Brunt of the War*, by E. Hobhouse (Methuen & Co.), p. 11.

watches the roof and furniture of a house blazing. I stood till late last night before the red blaze, and saw the flames lick round each piece of the poor furniture – the chairs and tables, the baby's cradle, the chest of drawers containing a world of treasure; and when I saw the poor housewife's face pressed against the window of the neighbouring house, my own heart burned with a sense of outrage. The effect on those of the Colonial troops, who in carrying out these orders of destruction are gratifying their feelings of hatred and revenge, is very bad. Their discipline is far below that of the Imperial troops, and they soon get out of hand. They swarm into the house, looting and destroying and filling the air with high-sounding cries of vengeance, and yesterday they were complaining bitterly that a suspected house, against the owner of which there was not sufficient evidence, was not delivered into their hands. Further, if these farms are to be confiscated, as the more vindictive loyalists desire, and given over to settlers, why burn the houses? The new occupant will only have to build another homestead, and building is a serious matter where wood and the means of dressing stone are so very scarce as here. The ends achieved are so small – simply an exhibition of power and punishment, which, if it be really necessary, could be otherwise inflicted; and the evils, as one sees them on the spot, are many.'

'When we retreated from Rustenburg in August of last year, after the evacuation of that town, every building in the neighbourhood of the northern-most road to Commando Nek was burned to the ground

without discrimination. No single act of treachery on the part of the Boers occurred on the road. It would be interesting to know what was the motive for the malignant destruction of these farms. I speak of things I know, *quaeque ipse miserrima vidi.*¹

Prominence was given to the detailed story of the Cronje family because it was published by Mr. (afterwards Lord) Morley in a letter to *The Times*, in November 1900. He received it, he wrote, from an Englishman, 'a man of position and responsibility in Cape Colony.' The account told of the experience of an educated Boer girl and her mother when the English soldiers first came and looted their farm, returning later to burn it before their very eyes. Mr. Morley added, 'I will not give offence to-day by intruding any unfashionable reflections about humanity, pity, and the like, and I go the full length with those who say that if you enter on a war you will have to face squalor, brutality and inhumanity. Of course that is the essence of war, though there are degrees even there.'

'But consider the unwisdom of these fire-raising and all their attendant abominations. Consider the resentment that is being accumulated in the mind of every Dutch-speaking man and woman in South Africa. "Burning down a farmhouse," well says my English Correspondent, "is an easy thing to write about, but only an agriculturist who knows the slow patient toil of years that it costs to make a home in the wilderness, can appreciate the full meaning of the work that is being carried out in the Orange Free State and Transvaal. You compared annexation to compulsory liquidation in bankruptcy, but what liquidator ever destroyed the assets

¹ Mr. Harvey de Montmorency in *Daily News*, op. cit., p. 19.

in the estate by way of settlement." Is not that an apt and sober question?"

Such stories can be multiplied almost indefinitely. There are differences, of course, in detail, but there is a sameness of general outline which makes more repetition needless.

This extensive destruction is confirmed in a report to the Society of Friends by two of their representatives, William H. F. Alexander and Lawrence Richardson, who visited South Africa late in 1902. The report says:

'Soon after crossing the Orange River we began to notice that the farmsteads seen from the train — always few and far between as compared with such a country as England — were almost without exception in ruins. On October 27 (1902) we had a drive in the neighbourhood of Pretoria, covering about forty miles, out and home. After getting clear of the outskirts of the city, say two miles on our way, we only passed one farm where the buildings had escaped destruction, and in this case the woodwork had been stripped. . . . Near Johannesburg on November 4 we had another drive extending over some fifty miles. Here the farms are of larger area but there are generally several families living near together sharing pasturage, but tilling their own allotments. As before, after once we had reached the district where the fighting had been, say eight or ten miles from town, all the buildings were destroyed except one outbuilding, and a small schoolhouse which had escaped by accident. . . . Each week we spent in these new colonies only widened our experience of the same facts, and we found a general consensus of testimony, both military and civil, that throughout the

greater part of these colonies, outside the immediate environs of the towns, it is most exceptional for farm-buildings to have escaped with the roof, and even when this has been left, all woodwork, including floors, doors and window-frames, has generally been taken for fuel. '... An official estimate placed the total loss of the Boers at £25,000,000 or, say, five-sixths of their property other than land.'

It appears that a certain number of Boers, in order to avoid the sufferings to which continued resistance exposed them, accepted the protection offered by the British Government and surrendered, being nicknamed by their fellow-countrymen 'hands-uppers,' whereas those who did not so surrender were known to the English as 'undesirables.' The first class were, of course, in reality refugees, and a military order of the 22nd of September 1900 states that camps for such people were being formed at Pretoria and Bloemfontein.

As the farm-burning had begun by June and July 1900 (that is, in mid-winter), the sufferings of the women and children, left homeless on the veld, must have been very great, and probably it was a genuine desire to alleviate these that prompted, in the first instance, the decision to house them in the camps, already formed for refugees as stated above, which began to take place in October. Indeed, given the fact of the farm-burning, the Camps were probably ultimately an alleviation of conditions, which would otherwise have grown worse and worse, although the Boer women frankly say they would have preferred them. But as Mr. Brodrick himself said, it was exceedingly difficult to house, clothe and feed an additional 63,000 people under war

conditions. Very true; then common sense and humanity dictated making arrangements for it before it was actually done.¹ For the war conditions obtaining made such organization extremely difficult. Every mile of railway line, and all horse and mule transport must have been strained to the utmost in those pre-motor days, to provide even for the needs of the army in that vast country, with its few, single-line railways. We remember, indeed, how acutely our soldiers suffered. To add to this difficulty by requiring all supplies for the Concentration Camps to be provided, was asking for trouble. In condemning the policy, it is not forgotten how some individuals struggled against, and often succeeded in overcoming the greatest obstacles, in order to provide for the people committed to their charge, and finally, no doubt, something like order was evolved out of chaos. In particular, the organization of education for more than 40,000 children was excellent. It must be noted that to remain in the Camps was obligatory. In November 1900, the Cape Town Relief Committee had made application for the release of those who had friends to receive them or whose expenses could be paid for by subscription, and this was refused.²

The actual journey to the Camp was often fraught with great hardships. Representations were made to General T—that, owing to lack of information beforehand to the railway officials, the women were sometimes kept from

¹ Captain Trollope, Chief Superintendent, on taking over the Orange River Camp, wrote on 6th September 1901: 'It is difficult to imagine how the refugees existed for six weeks before I took over from the Military authorities. I understood that I was taking over a "going concern," but absolutely nothing was in existence except the refugees, a few tents and the veld.'

² *South African News*, December 1900.

twenty-four to thirty hours in open trucks on the line without any attention being paid to them.

News of the burning of homesteads reached England through the newspapers in the summer and autumn of 1900, and Emily Hobhouse visualized so clearly the inevitable suffering involved that gradually she realized the solemn duty to go herself personally to succour the sufferers. She returned to her flat in Chelsea, after the usual visit to Lord and Lady Hobhouse at Charlton, resolved to carry out the plan, however great the obstacles and difficulties. Naturally, these were laid before her by her brother, Professor Hobhouse, and by Lord Courtney, whom she first consulted, but she obtained a sort of qualified assent to her proposal to form a committee to further the objects she had in view, and, having gained so much, she tells us how she set earnestly to work.

‘My aunt and uncle were in full sympathy and my aunt willing to be one of a Committee. She did more. She at once offered to put the Fund on the right basis by obtaining official sanction and guarantees for distribution. Before me lie copies of her letters to Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Chamberlain and their replies which express general sympathy with the object of the Fund and a promise to communicate with Sir Alfred Milner about it. The Government made, of course, certain quite natural reservations with regard to distribution lest supplies should be so placed as to leak through to men in arms against us. Their cordial consent was a great help in the furtherance of our movement. For my main object in forming this philanthropic committee was to secure, if possible, adherents

of all shades of opinion. The name chosen was "The South African Women and Children Distress Fund" and its character was clearly described as "purely benevolent, non-political, non-sectarian, national," and its object "to feed, clothe, shelter and rescue women and children, Boer, British or others who had been rendered destitute and homeless by the destruction of property, deportation, or other incidents of the military operations." People of every shade of opinion were invited to join it, and many did so. Others refused. I have before me the letters of representative leading men who refused to subscribe their names to this fund, while on the other hand Sir Edward Fry, Canon Barnett, the Master of Balliol, Herbert Spencer, the Bishop of Nottingham, the Marchioness of Ripon, Mrs. Bryce (now Lady Bryce), Lady Rendel, Mrs. Humphry Ward and many others willingly gave their names and support. Sir Thomas Acland became Chairman, Lady Farrer Hon. Treasurer, and Mr. C. E. Maurice its very helpful Hon. Secretary. The working Committee was a strong one and contained only one or two of those who had previously belonged to the "Women Workers." Notable among these was Miss Bradby, whose organizing powers and common sense were a great contribution. From many parts of the country people had been writing to ask me to whom they could send contributions and this too had made me feel the time was ripe for a National Fund. Working on at the preliminaries, and seeing the Distress Fund taking real shape, and finding that money was being sent me privately, with many anxious enquiries as to who would convey relief, I realized the time had

come to break my own intention to my relations, and thus form a point towards which to direct effort. Though independent and free and living at that time alone in my Chelsea flat, I yet did not feel justified in pursuing my long-nourished plan without the full acquiescence of my kind aunt and uncle [Lord and Lady Hobhouse]. To obtain that was the hardest part of the enterprise. This cannot be realized by girls of the present day; to understand all that is to turn back to the ideas of the nineteenth century, already so antiquated. I always plead my own cause badly and was nervous in proportion to the intensity of my feeling. I was armed with numerous letters from the Cape, all inexpressibly sad, and with many from English sources asking how funds could be sent. I merely hinted at the depth of determination which for months had been growing in me, and the certainty I felt that the difficulties ahead which I did not underrate could be overcome. My aunt and uncle were interested but dubious. But I persevered and in the end succeeded in eliciting a qualified assent. They expressed it in a formula which I felt was tantamount to a sanction. This was: "We do not wish to withhold our acquiescence if you feel it right to go, but we do not ourselves believe strongly enough in the plan to give you any material help." This, however, I had not expected or wished, for well I knew that if one undertakes a mission under compulsion of some inward force which cannot be conveyed to others and which merely rests on one's own faith for achievement, one must be prepared to carry it through without the help of others, at least as far as material things go. It had been part of my plan to

save up for the journey, so I at once replied that I neither expected or even wished for help of that nature, I only desired approbation. Also that I believed my money would hold out with care. Then I worked hard to let my flat and on November 29 was able to announce success to Mrs. Charles Murray. I took a second-class ticket on an "intermediate" to economize as far as possible and stayed in England only long enough to be present at the first meeting of the Distress Fund Committee when provisional officers were elected. As a nest-egg I was able to hand the Committee the £300 I had collected privately, and this sum they at once banked in Cape Town so that I found it there on arrival; and it paid for the first truck-load of food and clothing which I took with me to Bloemfontein Camp. I sailed December 7th, going quite alone and traveling second-class. . . . It was my first experience of the tropics and the voyage seemed, and was, very long. I remember the beauty of the day at the Canaries and the relief from the crowd of passengers, the sunshine and the glory of the scarlet Hibiscus. The rest of the time I spent reading books upon South Africa and above all in trying to learn as much Boer Dutch as possible.

'Looking back, I think again, as I have often thought, how delightful were all those people who joined in forming that humanitarian Committee and what a privilege it had been to be brought into contact with them. Mrs. (now Lady) Byles, had given me immense help, drawing sympathizers from her large circle of friends, the Bradbys, Mr. C. E. Maurice, Mr. Frederick Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. (now Lady) Courtney,

Mr. Nevinson, Mr. Trotter and many others. Many have already gone on before, some have been estranged by recent events from their former views, others still remain unchanged, ready as then to champion noble but unpopular causes and to help the innocent in distress of whatever nationality.

‘To have worked so long with people so far above myself in knowledge and attainment I have always held to have been one of the great privileges of my life.’

One can but wish that someone had shared with her the experience of her enterprise. Perhaps she was too essentially a ‘lone-hand,’ but could she have had a wise counsellor at hand to support or restrain, the difficulties of her hard task would surely have been lightened. As it was, she was facing the great problem single-handed, with only £300 which she had collected in England for relief and paying her own expenses from her slender income.

CHAPTER V

FIRST VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA

1901

EMILY HOBHOUSE arrived at Cape Town on 27th December 1900, a lovely midsummer morning. The beauty of Table Mountain rising over the Bay, she found quite overpowering, and South Africa exerted from that moment a great fascination over her. She loved its colour, its scenery, its sunshine, and above all, its people, who gave her a very warm welcome on her arrival and opened their homes to her most generously.

She was at once plunged into the atmosphere of war news and rumours; she heard of the newly established camps and listened to stories of women who had been deported from the north,¹ and consulted with many influential people as to the best plan of campaign.

¹ 'I have seen also Miss Neethling, two of whose sisters married two Hertzogs of the Free State. One is the Mrs. Judge Hertzog whose so-called attempt to escape, excited comment at home recently. The story is not exactly true. Her baby, a prisoner of war, aged seventeen months, was very ill, and she was almost distraught. There are no barriers to that camp, only sentries posted about, and Mrs. Hertzog was wandering almost demented, not knowing where she was going, when a sentry with a bayonet stopped her and turned her back. That was all. Miss Neethling, the sister, went from here to see if she could help these married sisters, but could not get them out. However, as the baby was so ill, she applied for leave to get him out, and after going from one authority to another, it was thought the British Empire would

Writing of her impressions of feeling in Cape Town at this time, Emily Hobhouse says:

'I was struck, for instance, by the intense devotion to England, a devotion which had received a severe blow. This feeling differed entirely from our own natural love for our country which allows us to see her faults without abating our devotion. The Cape people had seen England through a veil of idealism which had small relation to the reality. The Tory Government's war policy had torn asunder this veil with disastrous results. The effects were deep. Something life-long had snapped within them — their bearings were lost. Lively anxiety about their friends in the north added to their troubled state of mind. Hardly a family was there which had not blood relations settled in the Republics; it was a hard lot to see war of a harsh and cruel nature made upon their own kith and kin by the mother-country they had so passionately admired and yet remain neutral in word and deed as they were required to do. They did, however, almost universally achieve this degree of neutrality: to control their sentiments also was beyond the power of the majority. From the very first Cape homes had given shelter to women and children homeless or deported, and this they would have gladly done on a wide scale as the misery increased. Official refusal (or more precisely military refusal) to permit this sensible plan merely intensified bitterness while adding to the overcrowding

not suffer much if a permit was given for his release though without his mother; as her husband is defending his country still *she* must remain in prison.'

and suffering in the camps. Thus I soon found that beneath the calm exterior of the Cape Colonists whom I met, there were deep currents of bitterness which came to the surface in moments of roused emotion and which vitiated judgment producing an unreasoning attitude. Thus, difficulties and misunderstandings arose comprehensible enough considering the provocation endured. One felt very great sympathy with them.'

In consultation with her new friends, Emily Hobhouse decided to use at once her introductions to Sir Alfred Milner, who was well known to her family. Her sense of the importance of the interview and the responsibility resting upon her adequately to present the case upon which so much depended, made her almost physically ill. The story shall be told in her own words:

'If I failed in my presentment of the cause, the scheme for which I had toiled for months would fall to the ground and countless lives be lost that might be saved. I went alone in the train from Kenilworth to Cape Town unable to bear even companionship. I had in my pocket the mail letters which had just arrived, amongst them one from Kate Courtney. In the hope of relieving the torture of mind I read this and was rewarded at the end by finding a rare and very special thing, viz., a few words from the blind Mr. Courtney – written in his own hand – he could hardly guide a pen. It was just this:

'I add two words. Be prudent, be calm.

'Affectionately yours,

'LEONARD COURTNEY.'

'Coming from him himself—at such an agitated moment, the simple words were both a sedative and a tonic. There seemed a background of support and I always felt that more than any outside thing his message helped me through that longed-for but most difficult interview.

'I had set my heart on seeing Sir Alfred alone and was alarmed at finding myself in a luncheon party of eight men, not one of whom I knew. And there was no other woman. I sat next Milner, it is true, but felt choked in that, to me, unusual atmosphere of militarism, and unable to speak of what I had so much at heart when seven strangers were listening. They must have thought me, too, a strange animal and an awful bore. Sir Alfred began the subject, but I cut him short, saying that I could not discuss it at luncheon, and imploring him to give me a few minutes afterwards. He pleaded press of work; I pleaded this was part of the work and of great importance, and at last he promised me fifteen minutes, *not more*. In the end, when withdrawn, and deep in the subject, I was with him for over an hour. My letter to my aunt, written immediately after the interview, gives the essential result. I found him very willing to concede my special request, viz., that a Dutch lady should go with me, and I put forward the name of the well-known Minister's wife, Mrs. Roos. He approved her, but said all must be referred to Kitchener. It was wonderful how, as we sat on the low couch in the coolness and quiet of that spacious room, with its windows opening upon the green sward and grand old oaks of the garden—my nervousness passed away and I was able to converse

freely. This return of calm was undoubtedly due in large measure to Sir Alfred's singular charm and sympathetic manner so calculated to put one at ease. He spoke very openly, and I left at last with a great load off my heart and the certainty that he would do all that he could. And he did.

'I came out of that cool and calming room into the blazing Cape afternoon feeling as if wings were attached to my feet.'

In writing to Lady Hobhouse, Emily gives further details of the interview:

'Afterwards Sir Alfred took me alone to the drawing-room and we sat together on the sofa and went at it hammer and tongs for an hour. He admitted the farm burning was a mistake (how mild to put it like that) and he said he thought something should certainly be done to ameliorate the condition of the women and children, about whom he was evidently uneasy, for with his own eyes he had seen some truck loads of women when he came down the line, and it had occurred to him that it was rather terrible. Finally, after I had told him many details (and I did not mince matters) and told him how uneasy the English conscience was growing – and how desperately sore the Afrikaners felt and how for the honour of England we ought to mend matters in the camps, then finally he said he would do all in his power to forward my going the round of the camps as representative of the English movement and with me a Dutch lady, whoever I and the people here like to choose, as representative of South Africa. Then I said I must be allowed to take

two trucks with me, one with clothing and one with provisions, and this, too, he conceded, but – there is a “but,” and here it comes, he must refer it to Kitchener. He said he could do no more than recommend and urge Kitchener to allow us to go, if only on the practical ground that these camps must be properly organized, for they are likely to have to exist – not weeks – but months, and possibly run into years. In a few days he will let me have Kitchener’s reply, and meanwhile we are to settle on the Dutch woman (probably Mrs. Roos), and I want him to throw me in a third party in the shape of Ellie Cronje; who begged and implored me to take her and whose knowledge of the country would be invaluable.

‘I cannot tell you anything like all that passed. I implored him to offer terms – I told him a little kindness might lead the Dutch anywhere. I described to him the attitude and spirit of all the deported women I had met and asked him how he thought he was going to govern thousands of Joans of Arc.’

On 21st January 1901, Sir Alfred Milner wrote as follows to Miss Hobhouse:

‘GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CAPE TOWN: 21.1.1901

‘DEAR MISS HOBHOUSE,

‘I have written to General Pretzman, the Military Governor of the Orange River Colony, asking him to give you any assistance in his power.

‘Personally, I am quite willing that you should visit *any refugee camp in either T.C. or O.R.C.*, if the military authorities will allow it. As you are aware, Lord Kitchener is not prepared at present to approve of your

going further than Bloemfontein. But as he has expressly approved of your going as far as that, I do not think that there can be any difficulty about your visiting the camps, *either there or at any place on the railway south of it*. In any case, you can show this letter as evidence that, as far as I am concerned, such visits are authorised and approved of.

‘Yours very truly,

‘(Signed) A. MILNER,

‘High Commissioner.’

The enclosed telegram from Lord Kitchener was as follows:

FROM LORD KITCHENER, PRETORIA, TO HIGH
COMMISSIONER,

17th January, M. 14

‘Your letter of the 11th. I was asked from home if I would distribute funds amongst Dutch Refugee women kept out of their homes by the Boers. I willingly agreed to do so, but no funds arrived. Probably Miss Hobhouse is the bearer. I have no objection to her coming as far as Bloemfontein, but I cannot allow her further north at present. I hope this will be clearly understood. I should also prefer that she were not accompanied by a Dutch lady. There are numbers of ladies in Bloemfontein who will give her every assistance.

‘If she has any funds that she could pass to me, I would have them distributed in camps north of Bloemfontein by the Military Governors and Colonel Flint, the Controller of Refugee Camps, and receipts sent her. £1,000 would be very acceptable.’

Miss Hobhouse writes about the receipt of these:

'It was a great relief, and I felt truly grateful to Sir Alfred for the trouble he had taken and the goodwill he had shown me. The two limitations in Kitchener's message were disappointing, but it was a case in which half a loaf is better than no bread, and I did not hesitate to accept it thankfully. Sir Alfred, too, strongly advised it, hinting that later on I could again apply to the Commander-in-Chief. His refusal to allow a Dutch lady to accompany me was at the moment more baffling. I had so desired and counted on Mrs. Roos to enable me to face the difficulties of the country, climate and language, and I had built upon Sir Alfred's own willingness to arrange it. . . .

'On receiving Milner's letter I went at once to Government House to talk it over with him, and was graciously afforded a second interview. He promised to do his best to give me a comfortable journey as far as circumstances allowed, and he sent his secretary, Walrond, with me to see to the arrangements. I decided to start the twenty-second, my truck of goods preceding me by one day. I had as credentials Milner's letter of Authorization and Kitchener's telegram. The military gave me a Bogie truck capable of holding a large amount, and I set to work to have it loaded with food-stuffs, bedding and clothing. When I had spent all my available money, the truck was not full, and I lamented the want of faith that had prevented the collection and remission of larger funds. . . .

'My kind Cape friends provided me with a box of foods such as should more or less withstand the heat and a

kettle lamp for making tea and cocoa, and a few of them saw me off the evening of the twenty-second. It was a glorious moonlight night. Their kindness had been unceasing, and I felt I had in them a solid background in case of need. But as the train moved off towards the strange hot war-stricken north with its accumulations of misery and bloodshed, I must own that my heart sank a little and I faced the unknown with great trepidation, in spite of the feeling that the deep desire of months which had laid so urgent a call upon me, was indeed finding accomplishment.'

CHAPTER VI

THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

1901

EMILY HOBHOUSE very aptly prefaces her account of the Concentration Camps by the following quotation from Havelock Ellis:

‘To write is an arduous intellectual task, a process which calls for the highest tension of the muscles in the escalade of a Heaven which the strongest and bravest and alertest can never hope to take by violence. He has to be true – whether it is in the external world he is working or in his own internal world – and as truth can only be seen through his own temperament he is engaged in moulding the expression of a combination which has never been seen in the world before.’

Happily, we have the story told in her own words, and the biographer can step aside and let her speak for herself. The reader can judge far more truly whether had he been visiting the Camps he would have seen, as she did, the tragedy in each human experience, or have felt that military necessity knows no laws.

The following, as will be seen, was very largely written at the time of the experience:

‘Young women of this generation could not, I think, credit the state of miserable cowardice in which I found



myself when the train moved off. My friends were left behind and I had to face alone not only the strange country and strange language but the unknown and terrible strangeness of war. If these very competent and wholly self-sufficient young people could believe it, their contempt would be great indeed. But the fact must be confessed, however absurd it may seem to the more efficient youth of to-day.

'I found compensation in the extreme beauty of the brilliant night and in the wonder and variety of the scenery through which we passed. It was my first realization of Cape moonshine. By its light, as we halted at Salt River, I caught sight of my big truck; its name and number clearly to be seen. That seemed a link with realities. It must, as a matter of fact, have been hitched on to my train, for next day I saw it again at De Aar. It was a solitary journey. I was the only woman in the train and indeed I did not see another woman till my arrival in Bloemfontein. It was wonderful to see the totally new world which greeted me at dawn and to watch the sun rise for the first time over the silent Karoo. The train was very slow and stopped about a good deal for meals as there was no food on the car. These station meals were very unappetizing, and as they were thronged by British Officers it was always difficult for a mere woman, middle-aged, and somewhat dowdy at that, to squeeze in. When there was time a relay was arranged which gave me a chance of getting something – oftener I fell back on my own supplies – which, of course, after the first day naturally failed in variety: the butter particularly, in spite of damp cloths and tin, soon ran away – but my great

stand-by was a large tin of apricot jam – I recall it with gratitude for that tin served me through all my tedious journeys for months – moistening the inferior bread I could get here and there. For days, even weeks together, bread and apricot jam was my only food three times a day with a cup of cocoa. It got me through and that was the chief thing, but with the result that for many years to come I could not bear the sight, much less the taste, of apricot jam. Such is it to have too much of a good thing!

‘Of this strange journey – with its novelty, its heat, its dust, and its loneliness I wrote fully to Lady Hobhouse. I was absorbed in the strange scenery, the unknown vegetation, the uncanny form of rocks and koppies, the lack of trees and shade, the extraordinary silence – and as we got further on the signs of war – the passage of an army – the carrion strewn the veld and the overwhelming character of the resulting effluvia – Bloemfontein station, crowded with men, chiefly soldiers, appalled me, as I found myself still the solitary female – and it needed much showing of papers to get through. I had also difficulty in getting a room in the little hotel which I had been told was the best in the town – and at sight of the people thronging there my hopes fastened upon the welcome which Mr. Fichardt had assured me would await me at his mother’s house – the sequel to that hope appears in the following letters:

‘I arrived at Bloemfontein, the only woman, and began to learn from that moment what it is to be dominated by the military. All the railway officials sink into nobodies and soldiers rule the station. You can’t stir with-

out their sanction. The whole town is full of soldiers – and the little hotels and the post office – and a great ring of camps all round and pickets continually demanding your pass. It is a perfect terror, and I feel inclined to kick all day long. The inhabitants are weary of it all, and heart and hope is gone out of them. Business is at a standstill.

‘I slept at the inn the first night and the next day, early, Mrs. Fichardt sent her carriage for me and (when I reached her house) told me how much she would like to welcome me to her house, but in view of the extraordinary and unlooked-for things done under martial law, for the sake of her sons here she did not dare receive me unless General P – gave written permission which should ensure them protection.

‘I went to see him and he greeted me very warmly saying he and Mrs. P – had meant to ask me to stay at Government House, but typhoid had broken out and they were over-run by doctors and nurses. But he gave me a general invitation to meals whenever I like.

‘General P – nearly jumped out of his skin when I said I wanted to stay with Mrs. Fichardt, provided no ill should react upon her sons. “Oh, but,” he said, “she is very bitter.” “Just so,” I replied, “but my visit may have a softening effect upon her.” This was a new idea to him and he admitted there was something in it, and I stood over him while he wrote me a permit, stating his approval. Rather against the grain, but nevertheless he did it.

‘So I am in this large cool comfortable house, receiving great kindness, all unknown as I am. My lines have fallen in pleasant places, but in this country and

amongst this hospitable people that seems almost inevitable. Poor Mrs. Fichardt is very sad; she lost her husband six months ago in the midst of the war, and her two girls – one of whom is an invalid – are at Cape Town and not allowed to return to her, not even since their father's death – and the invalid is pining for home. I shall beg General P – to let them come back, but it may rest with still higher powers. Such an act would do more to allay the poor woman's bitter feelings than anything else could do.

'But I must pass on to tell you about the Women's camp, which after all is the central point of interest. General P – gave me his blessing over it and a permanent pass and introduced me to Captain N – who, until recently, has been in charge of it. The authorities are at their wits end – and have no more idea how to cope with the one difficulty of providing clothes for the people than the man in the moon. Crass male ignorance, stupidity, helplessness and muddling. I rub as much salt into the sore places of their minds as I possibly can, because it is so good for them; but I can't help melting a little when they are very humble and confess that the whole thing is a grievous and gigantic blunder and presents an almost insoluble problem, and they don't know *how* to face it.

'I explained that I was not going to do what the military *ought* to do, but really when looked into, what they are able to do is *so* little that I feel that donors would wish that the suffering of the women, and above all the tiny children, should be the chief thing taken into account. Major C – , now in charge not only of this camp but of every one in the once Free State, told me how he was

curtailed – no money – no trucks in sufficient quantity – no power to do what he would like to have done. He begs me to go to all the camps – the wild demand for clothing at places like Rhenoster drives him to despair, and he and I together are going to concoct a letter to Kitchener to obtain leave for me to go up north. I hope he will.

‘The Camp is about two miles from this town, dumped down on the southern slope of a koppie right out on the bare brown veld. Not the vestige of a tree in any direction, nor shade of any description. It was about four o’clock of a scorching afternoon when I set foot in the camp, and I can’t tell you what I felt like, so I won’t try.

‘I began by finding a woman whose sister I had met in Cape Town. It is such a puzzle to find your way in a village of bell tents with no streets or names or numbers. There are nearly 2,000 people in this one camp, of which some few are men – they call them “hands-up men” – and over 900 children. Imagine the heat inside the tents and the suffocation! We sat on their khaki blankets rolled up inside Mrs. Botha’s tent, and the sun blazed through the single canvas and the flies lay thick and black on everything – no chair, no table, nor any room for such, only a deal box standing on its end served as a wee pantry. In this tent live Mrs. Botha, five children (three quite grown up) and a little Kaffir servant girl. Many tents have more occupants. Mrs. Pienaar came in and Mrs. Raal, Mrs. Roux and others, and they told me their stories and we cried together and even laughed together and chatted bad Dutch and bad English all the after-

noon. Wet nights, the water streams down through the canvas and comes flowing in (as it knows how to in this country) under the flap of the tent and wets their blankets as they lie on the ground. While we sat there a snake came in. They said it was a night adder and very poisonous. So they all ran out to make room and I attacked the creature with my parasol. (Afterwards I was told it was a puff-adder.) I could not bear to think the thing should be at large in a community mostly sleeping on the ground. After a struggle I wounded it, and then a man came with a mallet and finished it off.

'Mrs. Pienaar is so brave and calm. She has six children ranging in age from fifteen down to two years, *and she does not know where one of them is.* She was taken right away from them. Her husband is in detention of some kind in Bloemfontein but not allowed to see her. She expects her confinement in about three weeks, yet has to lie on the bare hard ground till she is stiff and sore, and she has had nothing to sit on for over two months, but must squat on a rolled-up blanket. I felt quite sure you would like her to have a mattress and I asked her if she would accept one. She did so gratefully, and I did not rest yesterday till I had got one out to her though it had to go right under the eye of the picket who constantly refuses to let things pass. All her baby linen was in readiness at her home, but all is lost. This is but one case, quite ordinary, amongst hundreds and hundreds.

'The women are wonderful: they cry very little and never complain. The very magnitude of their sufferings, indignities, loss and anxiety seems to lift them

beyond tears, and these people, who have had comfortable, even luxurious homes, just set themselves to quiet endurance and to make the best of their bare and terrible lot. Only when it cuts afresh at them through their children do their feelings flash out. Mrs. Reintjes, for instance, has six children in camp, all ill – two in the hospital with typhoid and four sick in the tent. She also expects her confinement soon. Her husband is in Ceylon. She has means and would gladly provide for herself either in town or in the Colony, where she has relatives, or by going back to her farm. It was not burnt, only the furniture was destroyed. Yet there she has to stay, watching her children droop and sicken. For their sakes she did plead with tears that she might go and fend for herself. It is such a wholesale cruelty and one of which England must be ashamed. And it presses hardest on the children. They droop in the terrible heat and with the insufficient unsuitable food. Whatever you do, whatever the military authorities may do, and Major C –, I believe, is doing his best with very limited means, it is all only a miserable patch upon a very great wrong. Whatever you do is only temporary alleviation and can only touch a very few. The whole system is a mistake and has placed thousands physically unfit in conditions of life which they have not strength to endure. In front of them is blank ruin – and whole families are severed and scattered they don't know where. Will you try somehow to make the British public understand the position and force it to ask itself what is going to be done with these people. There must be already full 50,000 of them, and I should not wonder if there were not more. Some few have means –

but most are ruined and have not a present penny. In one of two ways the British public must support them; either by taxation through the military or else through voluntary charity. If they want to save their purses (you see I appeal to low motives), let a fuss be made in Parliament to allow those who can maintain themselves to go to friends in the Colony, where they would be received with open arms. That would be some relief. Then if only the British people would try to exercise a little imagination – picture the whole miserable scene, and answer how long such a cruelty is to be tolerated.

‘January 30. We have much typhoid and are dreading a great outbreak, so I am directing my energies to getting the water of the Modder River boiled. As well swallow typhoid germs whole as drink that water. Yet they cannot boil it all; for first, fuel is very scarce. That which is supplied weekly would not cook a meal a day and they have to search the bare koppies for a supply. There is hardly a bit to be had. Secondly, they have no utensil to hold the water when boiled. I propose therefore to give each tent another pail or crock and issue a proclamation that all drinking water must be boiled. It will cost nearly £50 to do this. But the Governor gave orders I was to be obeyed, and it should be paid from the treasury. He also appointed a temporary head – a certain Captain H – who is to drive me out this afternoon with orders from the Governor to do what I tell him. And I can hardly make up my mind where to begin. Soap, I think. All the tents I have been in are exquisitely neat and clean except two; and they were ordinary. And such limitations!

‘On Saturday I hope to start for Norvals Pont and

other places. I have been running round all day and at over 90° F. I enclose a packet of "cases" taken at random through the camp which might appeal to the conscience of the country to let these innocent people go free. It is so pathetic. They think I have come from England with magic powers to set them free, and it is dreadful to explain there is no chance of that. Nothing but famine lies before us if they may not go and cultivate at least a little for themselves. England must feed the whole country shortly, that even the military admit, but they lightly say, "Never mind, only another Mansion House Fund."

'January 31. Captain H., Dr. P., and I sat in council yesterday, and the doctor supported me loyally. I suggested a big railway boiler to boil every drop of water before it is served out. This will economise fuel and be cheaper in the end, besides ensuring the end desired, for many could not be trusted to boil their own.

'Next forage for the cows. We have just secured fifty, and only get four buckets from the poor starved things. Next a small boiler to boil the milk. A wash-house with water laid on from the town. A matron to superintend everything and *soap*. True, I was given *carte blanche* to order what I thought necessary, and I shall see how much of what I ask is given. We have sent to Cape Town for nurses and medical appliances.

'Then I went straight to my camp and just in one little corner this is what I found. Nurse Kennedy, underfed and overworked, just sinking on to her bed hardly able to hold herself up after coping with some thirty

typhoid and other patients with only the untrained help of two Boer girls – cooking as well as nursing to do herself. Next I was called to see a woman panting in the heat, just sickening for her confinement. Fortunately I had a nightdress in my bundle to give her and two tiny baby gowns. Next tent, a little six months baby gasping its life out on its mother's knee. The doctor had given it powder in the morning, but it had taken nothing since. Two or three others drooping and sick in that tent. Next, child recovering from measles sent back from the hospital before it could walk, stretched on the ground white and wan, three or four others lying about. Next, a girl of twenty-four lay dying on a stretcher. Her father, a big gentle Boer, kneeling beside her, while in the next tent his wife was watching a child of six also dying, and one of about five also drooping. Already this couple had lost three children in the hospital, and so would not let those go, though I begged hard to take them out of the hot tent. "We must watch these ourselves," they said. Captain H. had mounted guard over me – he thinks I am too sympathetic, but I sent him flying to get some brandy and get some down the girl's throat. But for the most part you must stand and look on helpless to *do* anything, because there is nothing to do anything with. Then a man came up and said, "Sister," (they call me Sister) "come and see my child, sick for nearly three months." It was a dear little chap of four, and nothing left of him except his great brown eyes and white teeth from which the lips were drawn back too thin to close. His body was emaciated.

"The little fellow had craved for fresh milk, but of

course there had been none until the last few days, and now our fifty cows only gave four buckets, so you can imagine what feed there is for them. I sent Captain H. for some of this and then made them lay the child outside on a pillow to get the breeze that comes up at sunset. I can't describe what it is to see these children lying about in a state of collapse – it's just exactly like faded flowers thrown away. And one hates to stand and look on at such misery and be able to do almost nothing.

Speaking of the comfort of letters received from home to counteract the dreadful war atmosphere, Emily Hobhouse says:

'It was a stultifying moral atmosphere. One could scarce breathe in it; few indeed were those who had the character to withstand the prevailing atmosphere (perhaps the majority in every community resemble chameleons and take the colour of their surroundings). Certainly to keep erect and true to the principles of our life training was – in that miasma – the hardest task I have ever faced. The work was nothing to it. So letters from home gave a balance, and restoring that helped one from sinking into that moral morass – which is *war*. For awful as war seemed unrolled before my eyes in the cessation of life's work, the maiming of men, the uprooting of a whole people, the destruction of their homes and property, the consequent disease, starvation, exposure and death – all this terrible and unforgettable as it was, yet was less terrible than the sudden breakdown of the decencies of civilization, the uplifting of the unprincipled, the negation of legality and the avoidance of the central teaching of Christi-

anity — all contributing to a state of moral degeneration. Bad as it was, the material suffering, the loss, the mortality, might have been bearable. Coupled with this moral collapse it was unbearable. The word War brings to my mind always these “imponderables,” as the Italians call them; as the result to be avoided far more than the physical and material horrors.

‘You can no longer be an individual — you are one of a herd — and that herd preserves itself by the reversal of [the] principles of virtue. Untruth, lies, hatred, inhumanity, destructiveness, spying, treachery, suspicion, meannesses innumerable, contempt, unfair dealing, illegality of every kind flourish and become, as it were, the “virtues of war.” The atmosphere thus created is a moral miasma.

‘During these preliminary weeks I had been much in touch with Government House and General P., and with the head of the Department in Control of Camps. This was Colonel C. with whom I was soon in easy relationship, and who showed every disposition to help me. It was disastrous that severe illness so soon removed him and one had to begin afresh with strangers.

‘Shocked by the suffering and condition of Bloemfontein Camp and by the too evident lack of means and material to improve them, added to the fact that on high authority it was announced that more and more convoys of women and children were coming, until the entire country population were swept up and interned [these facts] brought feelings of almost complete hopelessness. My own little fund was not calculated to provide such primal necessities as a water supply, tents, fuel, and such things of huge cost. Yet without those

things detailed relief was hardly more than a mockery. I had to think of the other camps (of which, I learnt, there were about forty) towards which I had also responsibility. I thought I ought to visit some of these and find out if their condition were similar, or if Bloemfontein alone was in such distress and would need the greater help. It would also be easier when the total population of the camp was established to calculate the provision required in tents, huts, water, etc. It was useless expense to lay on a half-inch water pipe to supply a camp of two thousand if in a fortnight's time a one-inch pipe would be needed for four thousand or six thousand. Yet that is what happened.

'I determined therefore to inform myself by a visit to the other camps while helping them by the gift of some cases of clothing, etc.'

The discomforts of travelling were often really severe for anyone, and more especially for a delicate woman. For instance we read:

'Coming from Springfontein I sat bolt upright for fifteen hours in a guard's van, shunting all night long with only some boiled milk in a bottle for company. But the sunrise on the veld near Bethulie made me forgive it all. One night I was laid up in the train at Jagersfontein in a fortified siding – in fact de Wet has made it a little difficult this week to get about. . . .'

Of the same journey she writes to her Aunt from Naauwpoort Station on the 10th February 1901:

'At the best of times travelling is bad enough in this hot, dry, thirsty land, but add to that military control of

everything, absence or partial disappearance of ordinary officials – permits and passes of endless kinds, the danger of travelling at night – the line occasionally torn up or a train burnt and the route blocked by countless strings of troop trains and supply trains all having to pass each other at sidings as the line is single, and you have some idea of the patience required.

‘One very hot day our eyes were refreshed by continual mirages presenting delicious views of cool stretches of water and imaginary cliffs. Sometimes I have slept in the train at sidings, sometimes at ghastly so-called “Hotels.” A German Lutheran missionary has shown me much hospitality and guards have been most kind in admitting me to their vans. Everything being in military hands it is all dirty and uncared-for. ‘I had great fears as to what I might find in the camp at Norvals Pont, knowing there was no town to draw upon for supplies or help of any kind. But I am glad to be able to report that it is far superior to the camp at Bloemfontein. The spot chosen is a slope surrounded by hills and about a mile from the station. From the Captain’s tent there is a pretty stretch of the Orange River visible, and far off the blue square-topped hill which marks Bethulie. The general character of the hills is similar to this – Table Mountains constantly recurring all through the land.

‘The population of this camp is about 1,500, and it is well laid out in rows and streets, with numbers so that you can find your way about.

‘Instead of drinking the waters of the Orange they use the river only for bathing, and Captain T. had pipes

laid on to a farm: a spring gives 14,000 gallons per hour and this pure water is brought into the camp.

'I tried to get the same method adopted in Bloemfontein, but was told the cost was prohibitive. Much to my delight I found there was much less overcrowding in Norvals Pont and that each tent was supplied with a low wooden bed, one or more mattresses, a bench and table utensils. Consequently the whole aspect of the people was different. The rations also were slightly better. There was no violent outbreak of sickness, though I understand that all the cases nursed in the hospital had died.

'They have no trained nurse. I hope one may soon be procured. The heat was very great. Captain T. told me himself that his large cool breezy marquee was usually 104° F. and he believes the bell-tents with single canvas rise to 110° F. The doctor said he could not use his clinical thermometer in them as it would not go down at all. I get greatly exhausted after sitting in these tents talking to the people a whole day, especially as there are six or seven in the tent and others from outside come and throng round the narrow opening excluding any possible breath of air. Captain T. had employed the men in the camp to make a tennis court, and this was just completed – sports of some kind are needed for exercise and to give one something to do – the idle life is so demoralizing. Sir Alfred Milner . . . is sending round the Education Commissioner to arrange about schools. In Norvals Pont two large marquees are set apart, and mistresses duly certificated are available from the camp population. Now the need of clothing for the children is very great.

Captain T. had been so unhappy about the clothlessness that he had ordered £150 worth, and had given it out, but had received a reprimand for his extravagance, so I undertook to forward some, and chose some women in the camp to store and distribute it where most needed.

'As we sat having tea at the door of the officers' tent we could see horsemen sweeping across the plain about three miles off, in a cloud of dust, and so near are the Boers that Major L. thought it was a Commando. 'The death-rate is not nearly so high in this camp, less overcrowding and better water. I felt a great deal relieved and finding the Commandant at the Station, a vague sort of person with very little red-tapeism, I seized the opportunity to squeeze a pass out of him to get on to Aliwal North. It was an awful journey, as I have elsewhere told you, but still I did get there. If I were shaped like a truck and ran on wheels I should be much better suited for my present work. Major L. had thought me an impostor when I first reached Norvals Pont, and no wonder. I had been travelling two days, and though it was late in the day had had no opportunity to wash and was so fagged I could hardly drag myself the length of the platform to get my letters of introduction out of my trunk. I explained this and then he laughed at my plight and said he would believe me, but that did not suit me, so I fetched the letters, and then he would not look at them.

'After endless difficulties I succeeded in getting [to Aliwal North] and a dear little town it is. Unfortunately, as I had come unexpectedly, I had left my introductions to people there behind, and could hardly tell

where to begin. So after reporting myself I went to the Post Office, and finding a fascinating young clerk got him to write me down a list of the chief inhabitants. So I managed to pick out the right ones to call upon, beginning with the Mayor and working down to the Medical Officer. They had formed a town committee to deal with the camp and have done their work really well. Poor little Aliwal, with only 800 inhabitants, had in four weeks to receive and provide for a population of over two thousand, nearly three times its own number. And it does them credit, for it is far away beyond the other camps – but then they have a most helpful Commandant in Major A. who could not speak highly enough of the people, their patience, good conduct and uncomplainingness under their privations and losses. . . . His camp can barely be called a prison; he has no soldiers or sentries, and every one is free to walk into the town or to receive visits from the people in the town without passes. The towns [people] of Smithfield, Rouxville and Zastron are all there, and so far only two deaths have taken place. Everything is beautifully arranged and provided for. He gives two tents to large families and offers sail-cloth to any who care to put up wooden framework to make extra rooms. He encourages them to come and state their needs. The rations here are better – compressed vegetables are given and 1 lb. of potatoes twice a week. And potatoes are 6*d.* a pound or eight times as dear as in London.

‘Last night we had tremendous rain [as] I was walking back from the Camp. Fortunately Mrs. Steyn, who was driving home with her trooper behind her, caught

sight of me in the distance and wheeled round to pick me up. She is allowed to drive to a certain distance. To-morrow I am to spend the afternoon with her; there is so much she wants to hear and to tell. She says my coming has been the first ray of joy since she was brought back a prisoner. It is hard to see how. Mrs. Steyn speaks so gratefully of young Lieutenant Hole.¹ He was [one of her gaolers] and so very kind to her and regardful of her feelings.

'To-night, coming back from Camp I got stuck in a bog. The rain has been tremendous and not knowing the look of the ground I carefully stepped where it looked driest and so sank to my knees in solid black mud. It was too comical; and there I stuck till a cart came by with some one in it I knew and pulled me out. 'I really think the Military conscience is aroused about these camps and they (the Military Authorities) only need some direction and suggestions to really try and make them fairly liveable. At the best they are horrid and the people sad and weary, but so very good. . . . 'Captain T. has now control of the camp system. He too was kind and interested in his work, but powerless in face of limited means. The line from the Cape was single and had to bring supplies for the towns of the two Republics – the entire army – and now the ever-increasing population of the camps. Before the devastation of the farms – this population was self-supporting – and the stock and flour and foodstuffs they possessed were recklessly destroyed. There appeared to have been no effort to preserve these precious sup-

¹ Lieutenant Hole, son of Dean Hole, was a barrister of the same Inn as President Steyn,

plies either for the army or for the owners or the general body of consumers.¹ . . .

"The number of deaths were increasing daily, which forced attention — at first I had hardly realized their significance. I began to compare a parish I had known at home of 2,000 people where a funeral was an event — and usually of an old person. Here some twenty to twenty-five were carried away *daily*. Captain T. remarked it too, and when I asked him what a normal death rate was, showed himself disturbed. The full realization of the position dawned upon me — it was a death-rate such as has never been known except in the times of the Great Plagues: to produce such a tale of deaths practically every one was far below par; the majority sick, and the dying on all sides. The whole talk was of death — who died yesterday, who lay dying to-day, who would be dead to-morrow. They accused me of talking politics, whereas we could only talk of sickness and death. They objected to "showing sympathy," but that was needed in every act and word. It was all kept very quiet; after a while the corpses were carried away at dawn, and instead of passing through the town approached the cemetery another way — many were buried in one grave. The little canvas tents covered its tragedy and the little tin hospitals — but there was a man who kept a list of the deaths, and only those who kept in close touch with the people themselves and with the vital statistics of the camp, knew what was passing. For some cannot read what is graven on the human countenance. Years later I read in "*I Promessi Sposi*" Manzoni's vivid account of the Plague in Milan,

¹ End of contemporary letter and resumption of autobiography.

and felt the similarity – Pepy's account of the 1665 Plague in London gives also some idea, but is written too much from the outside.

¹ 'To-day my whole mind has been bent upon mattresses; Colonel A. is quite concerned about them and Sunday afternoon he rode out to the Camp and we had another chat. Finally (as he says for love or money he can get no mattresses) we agreed that we would procure material and stuffing – get camp women to make them and pay them for their work. This will be best for then they can earn a little. It is all so difficult because material of all descriptions is getting as short as made goods. So in a few weeks I trust each tent will have a single mattress and the inmates be able to take turns in getting a comfortable night. Besides this I am promised a larger supply of tents so that there may be less overcrowding. At present it averages six to a small tent, which of course means nine or ten in many cases. The cubic capacity is under 500 cubic feet considerably; so even for six persons imagine the atmosphere at night. I have such splendid helpers in Mrs. Blignaut, Miss Fleck and Mrs. Krauser, three ladies of the town.²

'I wish all Jingoës would come out here and have a good course of Martial Law. That's the best cure I know of for the Military Spirit. A homœopathic cure

¹ Continuation of contemporary letters.

² Early in the war, Mrs. Blignaut organized a Committee to raise money for clothes for Boer prisoners. Miss Fleck visited the prisons to ascertain what was needed. The Committee was asked to help the women in the Concentration Camps, and acted as the local organization for relief given through Miss Hobhouse and other agencies.

perhaps, but a very thorough one. It's one thing to admire marching regiments, it's quite another matter to be dominated and ruled by those regiments. They seize and monopolize every public office . . . the best private houses fall to their share. You cannot stir in or out of town without their leave – nor live in the town unless they permit it. They say what newspapers shall be read and what news may be given in the favoured journals – they read your letters before you get them and as many as they choose of what you write before they are dispatched. You can't ride a bicycle without leave, nor be out after 9 p.m.; in many places lights must be out at 8.30, and to bed you must go. In fact your life is hemmed and hedged in by military rules and you can't realize what that means till you come and see what an imprisonment it truly is. Some few kick against it as it goes on month in, month out, with a sort of impotent fury – others relapse into dull, dogged sulks. Of course, it kills energy and enterprise – trade stands still, people are heartless and hopeless, only asking "how long." But those who are suffering most keenly and who have lost most, either of their children by death or their possession by fire and sword, such as the concentrated women in the camps, have the most conspicuous patience and never express a wish that their men should be the ones to give way. It must be fought out now they think, to the bitter end.

'I am planning to go to Kimberley next week and take Springfontein again en route. Fever has broken out there badly. It will be a hideous journey right down to De

Aar and up again, and de Wet may be on the warpath. To-day I have heard that Kitchener has had a narrow escape of capture. The Boers heard he was on the warpath sweeping down to De Aar, so they laid a trap to catch his little armoured train; but it so happened an empty train was in front of him containing nothing but a cannon, so they took that, and Kitchener, just behind, found out they had mistaken the train in time to escape by rushing back.

'Springfontein: I have several days' work here. It is a comparatively small and recent camp, but the people are poorer and more utterly destitute than any I have yet seen. This was largely because there was no adjacent town from which supplies could filter in. The Commandant, Major G., is really a kind man, willing to help both the people and me as far as possible, but his limitations (and mine) through lack of material, are woeful. Fortunately, I brought three cases of clothing with me, but it is a drop in the ocean of their needs. All day I have sat in a farm-house stoep and had each family in succession brought to me from the tents, fitting each in turn with clothes as far as possible, just to cover their nakedness. Each woman tells me her story – a story which from its similarity to all which have gone before it grows monotonous. But it is always interesting to note the various ways in which the great common trouble is met by divers characters. Some are scared, some paralysed and unable to realize their loss – some are dissolved in tears – some, mute and dry-eyed, seem only to be able to think of the blank, penniless future – some are glowing with pride

at being prisoners for their country's sake. A few barely-clothed women had made petticoats out of the rough brown blankets (so-called khaki blankets): One had on a man's trousers. Nearly all the children have nothing left but a worn print frock with nothing beneath it and shoes and socks long since worn away. Shoes we must leave – it is hopeless – until we can procure rolls of sole leather and uppers – lasts and sprigs, and then the men can make veldschoone, a kind of simple rough shoe.

‘Everything here is so scarce that the sight of my rough deal packing cases created quite a sensation – not for what was inside but for the actual wood. They are destined to make low bedsteads, tables, etc. and a few bits for firing. Mattresses, I fear, are out of the question here on account of the lack of material, but we thought low bedsteads might be made if a little wood could be found and strips of sacking nailed across. This would lift them off the ground for the winter. Perhaps we shall manage a few. The crying need in this camp is fuel – wood there is none – a little coal is served out, but so little that many days the people cannot cook at all and their rations are raw meat and meal and coffee, so each of these needs fire. If you could peep at Springfontein you would at once realize the hopelessness of getting any fuel – a bare veld, covered with sparse short grass, ringed by barest koppies, stony and without even grass. Except at the farm where I sat to give out the clothes there are no trees, and those have been grown with greatest pains. So there is nothing to burn.

'Many women to whom I have given nothing nor even offered to, and who neither ask nor wish for charity, express deepest gratitude for the bare tidings that any English people *feel* for them. They are very sore at heart and are really helped by the knowledge that we understand at all the aspect of affairs as it appears to them.

'Norvals Pont: Miss B. tells a humorous tale that in this last effort to catch de Wet, he himself heliographed to the British Generals: "De Wet nearly surrounded. Send one column more." And they did!

'I wish you could impress on the English public that one can't speak generally about these camps or the condition of the women therein. One is very different from another. I mention this because there is likely to be any amount of assertion and contradiction on this subject. You will probably hear the northern camps condemned and southern ones praised: whereas all are different and the amount of discomfort depends upon various matters.

1. The style of Commandant.
2. Natural conditions (proximity of wood and water).
3. Distance from a base store.
4. Presence of public opinion.
5. Date of commencement.

'The earlier camps, of course, had opportunities of getting many necessities which are no longer obtainable.

'I was in luck's way last night at Norvals Pont Station. About ten o'clock they told me finally no train would come in, so I asked if they were going to close the

R.S.O.'s office, and learnt it would be open all night. There was no resource but to ask to sit there too, and was told I could. Afterwards I went out for a turn in the air and to my surprise was followed by the R.S.O. himself, who very shyly, awkwardly and gruffly asked if I would care to have his bed for the night. He said he had a van. So he took me away to a siding where an old guard's van stood by the soldiers' camp, and lo! he had made of it a bed and dressing-room. Then he marched off with his pyjamas and left me in possession. I was so undone by this unusual and unlooked-for bit of kindness that when he was gone I collapsed into a fit of hysterical weeping. . . . It had been rather a trying day with opposition and contempt in the very atmosphere, after which a bit of kindness unnerved me. Then I examined my van and found a bath ready set with water and a mattress and khaki blankets – no sheets. But it was a lovely night.

'The camp is the smallest in area that I have seen; the tents too close together and the whole enclosed in an eight foot high barbed wire fencing which is supposed to be impregnable and cost £500! Sentries at the gate and walking inside. No nurse. An empty unfurnished marquee (which might be a hospital) – overcrowded tents, measles and whooping cough rife, camp dirty and smelling. An army doctor who seems to know nothing of children's ailments, fuel almost none, and general laxity in the management.

'A terrible evil just now is the dew. It is so heavy and comes right through the single canvas of the tents wetting everything. The night I slept at Norvals Pont

I found this out for myself. Even in a marquee with *double* canvas all my clothes were damp through and these people have to put on their things saturated day after day. All the morning, the roadways are filled with the blankets and odds and ends regularly turned out to dry in the sun. The doctor told me to-day that he highly disapproved of tents for young children and expects a high mortality before June.'

Towards the end of March, 1901, Miss Hobhouse paid a visit to Cape Town, obtaining whilst there a permit to Mafeking and to return to Bloemfontein. She writes :

'I reached Cape Town about the 24th, and the ten days there mended my body and rested my mind, full as they were. Many and long were the hours our train lingered on the Karoo. It was full of sick Tommies whom I nursed and cooked for and they taught me to draw boiling water from the engine to make tea and cocoa. A valuable hint in that dry and thirsty land. Often we wandered on the surrounding veld watching the wild cats, botanizing, gathering gum arabic and finding ice plants and other fascinating things such as grow in those parts, while the train stood still, we knew not why.

'As usual with her great hospitality Mrs. Murray gave me a shelter, and busy were those precious days. I had one or two long and particularly interesting interviews with the new Governor, Sir Walter Hutchinson. He received me with every courtesy and showed deep interest in all I told him. In fact in all my experience I found in all high officials, both civil and military,

more than mere courtesy – I found kindness and even sympathy.

‘[In the house of Mrs. Koopman de Wet] I met the Cape workers for the camps and was able to describe to them the exact conditions. The silence was profound, and I never forgot the tears when it became clear to them that the vast majority slept on the bare earth. They had at least pictured to themselves nice wooden floors – but with very few exceptions, and then much, much later, after the reforms, the people lay on the ground.¹

‘Mafeking: I arrived here this afternoon after a long and singularly tedious journey. I felt obliged to come having learned there were about 800 women in this camp, besides those at Warrenton en route. I felt uneasy, for I could learn no details at all about the people here except that the camp was four miles out of the town. At Warrenton there *were* only about 310, pushed into the church and school, as tents were well-nigh unobtainable, but *now* only yesterday, many hundreds more have been brought in there; in fact the whole town of Hoopstad.

‘April 10. Mafeking: To-day I have been out in the Camp the whole day. I had to take a Cape cart and drive out, for it is full six miles – a lonely, lonely spot. Mafeking itself feels like the end of the world and the Camp seems like driving six miles into space. There are 800 or 900 people and it is the oldest of all the

¹ A strong Committee had been organized in Cape Town by Mrs. Koopman de Wet to give help to the women in the Concentration Camps, with which Miss Hobhouse was able to co-operate.

camp I have visited — in fact nearly a year old. They were very glad to see me. The hospital nurse said it would put new life and courage into her. She was feeling so downhearted about it all. I found some very nice people whose relations I had made friends with in Bloemfontein Camp and also in Kimberley. It is quite interesting sorting out the people and telling them where their relations are. I am at present hunting for the mother of two little boys, aged about six and seven, who were swept up by a different convoy. The Mafeking Camp folk were very surprised to hear English women cared a rap about them or their sufferings — but they *did* know that a few members in the House of Commons spoke up for them. It has done them a lot of good that real sympathy is felt for them at home, and so I am glad I fought my way here, if it is only for that reason. The Camp was specially interesting to me as the first I have seen under Transvaal rule. For rations and fuel it is far the best I have seen, but, as usual, no soap. . . . The rations are better than any other Camp (known to me) through a fortunate accident; too long a story to dilate upon in this short letter. They are badly off in blankets, many having none, also soap and candles and clothes. They have *no one* to visit them or care for them from the outside. For miles round no habitation can be seen and Mafeking folk are too bitter to do anything to help them.

‘April 11. To-day I took to the Camp large bundles of stuff as suitable as Mafeking can supply — the choice is not large. I formed a Clothing Committee of seven

women and in the afternoon we met and I showed them how to organize their work for the Camp. They are very pleased and are going to meet every Thursday, besides dividing the Camp into sections and making a house to house (tent to tent) visitation. All the seven women are themselves in need of clothes and they have all had their houses burnt, one by Kaffirs, and the rest by British troops. Amongst them were the Hartmanns (in whose tent we were met). I had met their relations in Bloemfontein and found all the family first-rate people. Old Mr. Hartmann is a dear old Boer — with a long white beard, and bright dark eyes. He was keeping his 69th birthday and managed to be cheery, and even mirthful in spite of the consciousness that late in life he was without house, stock or money. The military had given him *one* of his own cows and that had died in Camp. He was immensely amused at our meeting of *women*, for he said he had never seen such a thing in his life, and he kept popping in and out just to see how we managed, and what we talked about. One old lady I saw was very interesting, a real character, a Mrs. Coetzee. She was very broken-hearted, more so than anyone I met. She harangued me on the subject of her feelings and experiences the best part of an hour, in really eloquent Dutch, and much solemnity. She described with the extraordinary unselfconsciousness, which characterizes them all, the whole history of Lord Methuen's visit and actions, and how she had thrown herself flat on the stoep and implored him to trample on her and kill her. And she showed me the clothes she had brought with her and there was nothing for herself but her white "dood-kleere," viz.

her dead clothes. I fancy she thought that would be all she would want in Camp. It was rather a Job-like scene. She sat in her bare baking tent, a circle of friends round her, an intensely religious woman, trying to understand God's dealings with her and her people in letting *everything* be taken, and she ended at last with a solemn thanksgiving to "Onze Heer" that the English people cared even to send some one just to *look* at their misery. Altogether the old woman was a striking figure and very pathetic.

¹I think that bad as the Camp at Mafeking was and terrible as the death-rate continued to be – in so much that 500 died in a few weeks between the first and second visit of the "Ladies' Commission" and the Superintendent was dismissed, yet the appalling tragedy of it all came home to me in the sight I witnessed at and near Warrenton, both going and returning. Those truck loads of women and children, unsheltered and unfed, bereft of home, bearing the vivid recollection of their possessions in the flames – and that mass of the "sweepings" of a wide military "drive" – flocks and herds of frightened animals bellowing and baaing for food and drink, tangled up with wagons and vehicles of all sorts, and a dense crowd of human beings – combined to give a picture of war in all its destructiveness, cruelty, stupidity and nakedness such as not even the misery of the camps (with their external appearance of order) could do.

'Here I am again in Bloemfontein. I arrived yesterday, taking two and a half days from Kimberley. Mrs. Fichardt has taken me in again with the warmest wel-

¹ From the autobiography written in later years.

come and greatest sweetness, though I fear she has already suffered from having done so. Her pass allowing her to drive once a week to their farm at Brandkop has been taken away and enquiries at the Intelligence Office elicited the information that one of her sins was that "she had harboured Miss Hobhouse." But nothing daunted she is harbouring me again. The air is very pleasant here now in this autumn weather and the gardens are green after the rains and full of chrysanthemums. A little spring is oddly mixed up with the autumn, such as lilac and violets.

'My camp work grows so fast and so rapidly that I feel it is almost impossible to cope with it. Here there are now 4,000 – or double the number I left six weeks ago. At Springfontein I left a manageable little camp of 500 – now it has swelled to 3,000, and as we passed yesterday morning there was a train-load in the station of 600 more. It was pitiable to see them massed into the train, many of them in open trucks. It was bitterly cold and I was wrapped in your thick grey shawl ; all night there had been a truly torrential downpour of rain, and water stood everywhere upon the ground. On the saturated ground they were trying to dry themselves and their goods. Some women were pushing their way to the platform to try and buy food for their children. The soldiers would not permit this. I expostulated – the men said they were sorry for them, but they had to obey orders. It was Sunday morning and Springfontein's one small shop closed, and I knew the Refreshment Room was the only place where food was available. Just then little Clara Sandrock ran up from the Mission Station with a can of hot coffee for

me. I had waved to them from the train as it passed the house, and had seen the old clergyman run in and warn his wife that I was passing. So Clara and I ran down the platform to the cluster of women and gave them the coffee and I took them all the food I had in the train with me. Fortunately I had just bought a twopenny loaf (for 1/-) and I had some tinned meat. A nice-looking woman with a very white face spoke to us – said they had been travelling two days and no food given, and the children were crying with hunger. I gave Clara Sandrocks some money and told her to buy all the food she could in the station and take down to them, and to devote the day to it, leaving church alone. The girl promised, and I had just time to jump into my train. I would have stayed myself and see to it, but my permit was not stamped to break the journey, so I could not do so. I know Clara will do her best: she is only fifteen, but very womanly.

'If only the camps had remained the size they were even six weeks ago I saw some chance of getting them well in hand, organizing and dealing with the distress. But this sudden influx of hundreds and thousands has upset everything and reduced us all to a state bordering on despair. I feel paralysed in face of it. I feel money is of little avail, and there are moments when I feel it would be wisest to stop trying, and hasten home to state plain facts and beg that a stop may be put to it all. Yesterday I lunched with Colonel G., and he was, as always, very agreeable; but he tells me that more and more are coming in. A new sweeping movement has begun, resulting in hundreds and thousands of these unfortunate people, either crowding into already

crowded camps or else being dumped down to form a new one, where nothing is at hand to shelter them. Colonel says, What can he do? The General wires: "Expect 500 or 1,000 at such a place." And he has nothing to send there to provide for them. He, being wholly out of tents, has sent to Port Elizabeth, and had thirty shelters made of sorts – and there they lie, he can't even get them sent up. And I told him I wasn't surprised for I don't believe all his power as a Deputy Administrator (and that is not much) would get things sent up unless he went and stood in the goods yards himself and saw the trucks packed, as I found necessary at Cape Town, or I should never have got a garment north.

'About food, too, the Superintendent of a camp is getting in rations for such and such a number and suddenly 500 more mouths are thrust in upon him and things won't go round. Last Saturday 400 families were without meat in Bloemfontein Camp for that day and Sunday. This would not matter if there was an alternative, but there is only the ordinary supply of coarse bread to fall back upon, with black coffee and sugar. No wonder sickness abounds. Since I left here six weeks ago there have been 62 deaths in camp, and the doctor himself is down with enteric. Two of the Boer girls we had trained as nurses and who were doing good work are dead too: one of them, Poppy Naude, was a universal favourite. She did not know where her mother was. Her father was in Norvals Pont, and there had been some talk of my taking her to join him, but in the end she thought she was doing useful work where she was, earning 2/- a day, and she had better

stay and nurse the people in Bloemfontein Camp. And I come back to find her dead! The doctor, the nurse, and all had said, "We can't spare Poppy."

'But in spite of the death roll, I think [I have] saved and strengthened many children. Mrs. Botha I engaged, you will recollect, to go the rounds daily amongst the sick babies and children, and they calculate she has saved about 100 by that care. A few drops of brandy, maizena, Mellins, and, where possible, fresh milk.'

On her return to Cape Town Emily Hobhouse halted at Springfontein, where she was shocked to find still massed on the railway siding the same unfortunate people she had seen on her journey north ten days before. Another halt at Norvals Pont brought a disagreeable experience:

'It was, I think, on this last occasion that I found myself at night stranded. I had left the camp early and returned to the station, the train being about four o'clock. It did not come; we waited on till dark. It was then announced there would be no train that night, and not till next morning.

'I had nowhere to go, the few little houses and shanties were packed. As before, the military possessed the whole station and the friendly elements were gone.

'Tired as I was, there was no alternative but to climb the long road again to the camp. Carry my hand-bag I could *not*, and begged leave to put it in the R.S.O. Imagine my distress on reaching the cross roads leading to the camp to find a picket of soldiers stationed there, who called me to halt. Fortunately I knew the sign and the countersign, but they demanded my pass. Alas! all my papers I had left in my bag at the station,

In vain I told them so and explained the position; they were, quite rightly, firm.

'I was too exhausted to return to the station to find my bag, and probably the office would have been closed. If I could not pass into the camp, lying quiet below in the moonlight, I must ask leave to stay all night with them. There was no alternative. Underfed and exhausted my legs would carry me no more. I hated having to persuade them against regulations, but I had to do so and at last they gave in and I crept by moonlight through the camp, thinking it best to go to Miss B.'s tent and beg for shelter. Lights were out, and all was silent; rather alarmed they untied the flap of their tent and most kindly sheltered me that night. The train was expected at seven, so very early they roused me and I thanked the sleepy soldiers as I hurried past.

'I was in time and with soldiers all the way for company reached Cape Town the early morning of the 5th. I was indescribably dirty and unkempt. Washing had been almost impossible for days, even for face and hands, and hair and clothes were permeated with red dust. News was brought me that the ships were all full, the only available berth being an upper one in a first-class cabin on the *Saxon*. This was to leave in two days. I was beset with uncertainty. Should I do more good by remaining at Cape Town? I felt *not*. There was but an hour to decide lest the berth be lost. I took it and sailed on May 7th. Once again for three nights Mrs. Murray refreshed and housed me. She and others happened to know Mr. Potgieters of the Transvaal, who was leaving for Europe by the *Saxon* and they

very kindly introduced him to me, so that I might have some one to speak to on the voyage. He was travelling with wife and family, and a very large family it was and very friendly.

‘To me the important part of the voyage was the chance afforded of a talk with Sir Alfred Milner.’

CHAPTER VII

THE LADIES' COMMISSION

1901

IN the last chapter was pictured the condition of the Concentration Camps as described by Miss Hobhouse at the time of her visit in the early months of 1901. As the facts she gave were the subject of heated criticism and opposition, it will be well to see how they were borne out by the findings of the Official Investigators; so, neglecting chronology, we will next refer to these by way of comparison.

The most important is the 'Blue Book'¹ containing the report of the Ladies' Commission, which Commission, as we shall see in the next chapter, was appointed in July by the British Government in reply to the outcry in England resulting from Miss Hobhouse's campaign. This Report was signed on 12th December 1901, nearly seven months after she landed in England on her return from South Africa, so that there had been a very considerable time for improvements to be made, as doubtless had been done.

Any facts corroborating Miss Hobhouse's criticisms are, therefore, the more important as indicating that the conditions had continued month after month, notwithstanding that the attention of the authorities had been so long called to them.

It is necessary to the understanding of the position that some of the findings of the Commission should be given.

¹ Cd. 893, 1902.

The Commission was led by Mrs. (now Dame Millicent) Fawcett, accompanied by five other ladies, of whom two were doctors. The report conforms to 'Blue Book' type – a bare recital of facts which has no room for any expression of human sympathy with those who were suffering, but on the contrary, is very conscious of their shortcomings, such as their addiction to most questionable remedies, their hatred of fresh air and their dirty habits. It must be remembered that the average human being is not remarkably adaptable and that life in the conditions of the veld is very different from confined cramped existence in overcrowded tents, many habits which may be harmless in the former being most unsuitable for the latter. Those of us who remember the similar experiences of refugee camps during the Great War have probably come to the conclusion that to be a successful and praiseworthy camp dweller would require all – and perhaps more than all – the virtues with which we can credit ourselves! Again, the strong condemnations of the shortcomings of the camps from the standpoint of the authorities is important confirmation of Miss Hobhouse's strictures.

The investigation made by the Commission strikes one as very thorough. All the thirty-four camps but one were visited – including very many to which Miss Hobhouse had been forbidden access – and many were visited more than once. The Commission travelled everywhere, of course in their special train, and all arrangements were made to facilitate their journey – a marked contrast to her experiences! That they were able in some instances and in some respects to praise warmly is beside the point – for an occasional hospital where was available first-class surgery, for instance, could not make up for the lack of necessities in that or any other camp. Certain defects they found in a large

number of the camps, such, for instance, as the need for a 'camp' matron, for increased hospital accommodation, equipment and staff; for decent and increased sanitary accommodation (one latrine to 177 women and children in Aliwal North, p. 51), boilers for boiling drinking water, and bedsteads for the people who were sleeping on the cold damp ground. In one camp (Orange River, p. 70) no bedsteads had been issued, in another (Bloemfontein, p. 41) it was estimated that two-thirds of the people were sleeping on the ground, and Mr. Cole Bowen, the excellent Superintendent of Norvals Pont Camp, said that more children had died from sleeping on the ground than from any other cause (p. 47). The Commission repeated Miss Hobhouse's suggestion that a travelling Inspector of the camps should be appointed, and Mr. Bowen was appointed to the post for the Orange Free State as she had also desired.

Whilst fully realizing the inherent difficulties of the organization of such camps, the Commission yet felt that in some cases gross carelessness or neglect had been shown. For instance, of Brandfort Camp (p. 82) they say, 'The Commission feel that the hospital work is thoroughly disorganized and that the terrible epidemic in camp has not been properly grappled with.'

Of Heilbron (page 91) they write:

'Measles, which have almost died out in camp, are rampant in the town, [this was a part of the accommodation of the camp] and the Commission have much pleasure in stating that everything which human skill and care could do was being done for the patients. In spite of being in houses the death-rate was very heavy, 10 dying on one of the nights of the Commission's

visit. Though some of the houses were comfortable, others were miserable sheds or stables, and one hovel was surely only meant for a pig or perhaps some poor native, and yet a young girl dangerously ill lay in it; and yet the people prefer these wretched places to living in tents. The epidemic had been so sudden and so large that it had been impossible to take the patients into hospital. Heilbron had been very healthy until some hundreds of measles-infected people had been sent from Kroonstad. There is barely language too strong to express our opinion of the sending of a mass of disease to a healthy camp; but the cemetery at Heilbron tells the price paid in human lives for the terrible mistake.'

But indeed it would take too long to tell the whole tale; of the issue of milk under filthy conditions (p. 117), of the hospital with no fresh milk at all (p. 36), of the camp soaked with enteric and the water supply bad (p. 193), of the fuel ration of 1 lb. per head per day, which led to the people eating half-cooked food (p. 78), of the serious overcrowding (p. 104) and of scarlet fever without any attempt at isolation (p. 25). And to give one instance of the serious condition of a camp the following extracts are taken from the account of Potchefstroom, taken as typical and not designated by the Commission as exceptionally bad.

'Water is brought from the Mooi River in a furrow 3 or 4 feet broad, which begins at a place half a mile up the stream and runs along the lower part of the slope on which the camp is pitched. The bottom of the furrow is black muddy earth, and the fall is less rapid than that of the river; here and there we saw the green slimy growth only formed in very slow moving

water. At certain places along its banks the ground is trampled down by animals coming to drink in it. We found bones and skulls of oxen, old tins, old boots and rubbish in the muddy bottom.

'The water as it flows through the Camp is dark and dirty, and here too, we found old tins, paper, old boots, a dead crab, etc., had been thrown in it. The people are prohibited from filling their buckets except from the centre of the little footbridges which cross the furrow. We watched numbers filling their pails, but in no instance did they do so from the bridge. We noticed a woman — one of a party which was accompanied by the Boer police patrol — filling from the bank and trampling clods of earth into the furrow as she did so.

'Bath-houses there are none. A bath-house is to be arranged for the women. The men bathe in the river.

'Mr. Swart thought half of the people were without any kind of bedstead, but he had ordered a lot of wood for kartels [a sort of bedstead]. . . .

'The hospital is in an old church in the town which had not even been whitewashed before being put to its present use. . . .

'The windows are not made to open, so the only means of ventilating it is to remove some of the panes of glass.

'The matron said the people often put off coming to the hospital till recovery was practically hopeless; consequently the hospital returns show a very high death-rate; 163 patients have passed through the hospital in eight months, and of these 46 have died, or one in $3\frac{1}{2}$, a death-rate almost equal to that of plague amongst Europeans.

'The Mortuary was used as a receptacle for soiled linen, which lay about upon the floor.

'The typhoid sheets are neither boiled nor disinfected. They are simply washed in cold water.

'There are no separate pails for typhoids, etc. The drinking water for patients is neither boiled nor filtered. The hospital was badly supplied with fresh milk (four bottles daily), it was also short of fresh meat and vegetables, although there are now plenty in the camp garden.'

Lastly we come to the most important test of all, that of the vital statistics.

The Ladies' Commission give these for a varying number of months previous to their visit, and one reads (on p. 143) that of 106 cases of measles treated in the hospital at Balmoral Camp, 15 died; that at Middelburg out of 5,947 people in camp, 403 died in the month of July, of whom 197 were children between one and five. The facts contained in the Report of the Ladies' Commission and even more the figures given in the other 'Blue Books' giving monthly reports from the camp authorities, provide very strong justification of Emily Hobhouse's criticisms. To summarize them here is impossible, nor could we, in fact, improve upon a summary made in the *Investors' Review* for 28th June 1902, then edited by Mr. A. J. Wilson, who dealt with the matter from a statistical point of view. The article says:

'To get anything like a connected view of the vital statistics of the camps is not an easy task. The 'Blue Books' present a mass of 1,200 pages of matter, ill-arranged, or for the most part not arranged at all. If

an insolvent debtor placed before the courts accounts kept in such a fashion, he would risk the suspension of his certificate for an indefinite time. ! . . We have sometimes no fewer than four versions of the facts relating to the same camp at the same time. Thus the deaths in the Standerton Camp in October 1901, are variously given as 205, 200, 240 and 241. We find three discordant statements respecting the deaths in the Vryburg Camp also in October. . . . These are but a few examples of the way in which "under the eye of the great administrator" the record of the camps is presented in these terrible books. . . . After this, the reader will readily believe the assertion that it has required the labour of many days to produce a statement which we could venture to place before our readers. . . . It is not possible to show the whole case without elaborate tables for which we cannot afford space. We give one table only, showing the general results of our enquiry.' [See next page.]

'We have by no means the whole sad story. Some of the camps were established as early as September, 1900; many were established in October, and November, 1900. But the returns tell us nothing of the deaths in the camps of the Orange Free State before January, nothing of the deaths in the Transvaal camps before April, when some of the camps had been working for six months. . . . The highest death-rate for the camps generally was reached in October, 344. The highest rate for camps taken in groups is 401, for the camps of the Orange State, also in October. These figures relate only to the population of men, women and children taken together. They are far exceeded when we

TABLE SHOWING THE POPULATION OF ALL CAMPS FROM JULY, 1901 TO FEBRUARY, 1902, THE MEAN POPULATION AS FAR AS ASCERTAINABLE, DEATHS AND DEATH-RATES PER THOUSAND PER ANNUM.

Date	Population (corrected).		Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 per annum.
1901				
July	102,651	90,213	1,716	228
August	111,540	102,820	2,666	311
September	116,225	107,482	2,572	287
October	118,408	111,864	3,205	344
November	117,871	112,109	2,926	313
December	117,125	111,985	2,437	261
1902				
January	115,037	110,183	1,477	160
February	114,181	109,315	628	69
			17,627	
Recorded deaths before July			2,550	
			20,177	

come to the rates of child mortality. Here we have 629 per thousand per annum for the Orange State camps again in October, and 585 for the Transvaal. But again these rates sink into insignificance when we look at the rates of child mortality in certain camps taken each by itself.

August—

Nylstroom	1,418	per thousand	per annum.
Pietersburg	1,212	„ „	„ „

October —

Mafeking	1,737	per thousand	per annum.
Standerton	1,855	„ „	„ „
Vryburg	1,202	„ „	„ „

‘No one would dream of charging Mrs. Fawcett, or any of the ladies forming her Committee, with “hysteria” or “sentimentality.” . . . In the whole of their report there is not one word of pity for the misery they witnessed. . . . The provisional statistics for April lately issued, show a reduction of the general death-rate to thirty-two per thousand—less than a tenth of what it was in October. This result might have been attained a year ago, if the Government had not turned a deaf ear to all warnings. And let us not forget, the Boers and the Dutch race throughout the world never will — that the improvement is due to Miss E. Hobhouse. In this improvement she will find full compensation for all the abuse showered on her by her own countrymen.’

Another calculation published by the South African Conciliation Committee¹ shows that the average infant and child population of the Transvaal Camps from May to September 1901 was 25,631. The deaths of infants from 0 to 1 were 828 — of children from 1 to 12, 3,070. From which it appears that the death-rate of children between 1 and 12 is something exceeding 287 per thousand. The Manchester Life Tables of that period, compiled by Dr. Tatham, showed a death-rate at the same ages in that city as 20·4 per thousand. The camp death-rate was therefore

¹ Salient facts from the Camps’ ‘Blue Book,’ p. 4.

quite fourteen times that for the corresponding ages in a large English town.

These facts could be multiplied and enlarged upon indefinitely, but perhaps enough has been brought forward to show that Miss Hobhouse was justified in her strictures upon what was going on, and her endeavour to bring before the public facts which the Government had not heeded until forced to do so by the strength of feeling in the country.

CHAPTER VIII

WORK IN ENGLAND

1901

EMILY HOBHOUSE landed in England on her return from South Africa on 24th May 1901, and went at once to stay with Lord and Lady Hobhouse in Oxfordshire, where she found the comfort and beauty and warm welcome very refreshing after her sorrowful experiences. But she was in no mood for rest, with the responsibility of what she had seen upon her. She learnt of the wise and careful use of the information she had sent back, which is proved by the constant correspondence between her brother, her aunt and Lady Courtney, who had been most anxious to avoid any hindrance to her future work. She writes:

‘I know, however, that parts of my letters were, through Lady Harcourt, shown to Brodrick and Balfour, who both felt the subject needed enquiry. It was probably from that time that amelioration began in the Camps as far as canvas and iron accommodation went, water and fuel supply—improved sanitation and more hospitals and nurses [which] so changed the appearance of the camps in the four months that elapsed between my visit and that of the Ladies’ Commission, life in them was a different thing from that which I had witnessed. Food was, however, not increased till the Ladies’ Commission insisted in their interview with Kitchener, and the death-rate did not abate till after that extra food was distributed.’

In consultation with her relatives, Emily decided that her first duty was to lay her information before the Secretary for War, Mr. Brodrick. Accordingly she asked for, and was granted, an interview of which she records:

'It was my first interview with a Secretary of State, and I felt very nervous – but after a few minutes that passed away and the time flew as he expressed ignorance and interest. It was nearly 2 p.m. when he glanced at the clock. I took the hint and rose. He had been most willing to listen. He asked for my suggestions which I had tabulated previously, and which I handed in at the War Office the same afternoon. I had pleaded hard; the vision of the camps and the suffering women was vivid, and I felt myself the mediator between them and the powers of England. My belief – always instilled into the women – that their sufferings would never be tolerated by the English people if they were but known – carried me through this interview, and the fact that my suggestions were called for, continued to uphold my view. Alas! I had not reckoned with the Cabinet as a whole.'

The suggestions to which reference was made included the following: That women who could support themselves elsewhere should be allowed to leave the camps; that a minister and a matron should be appointed to each camp, and free access given to at least six representatives of English philanthropic societies; that no more women should be brought into the existing overcrowded camps, and that any new camps should be placed in healthy spots nearer to available supplies.

After three weeks came Mr. Brodrick's reply, yielding in

general to most of the suggestions,¹ but qualifying that with regard to allowing freedom to women able to support themselves outside the camp by the phrase 'unless there is some military objection.'

'Cabled to the Cape this concession encouraged many to apply for the release of relatives, but few indeed were successful. It is almost a dead letter. Sadly it came home to the people that the promise was mainly to relieve the English mind. One case in particular impressed me greatly, viz. that of Mrs. Hertzog. Parted from her only child she endured the horrid monotony of Port Elizabeth Camp for two years and the danger and disease of Merebank Camp for many months. What should we think if enemies were to imprison the wives of our leading generals! If Lady Methuen or Lady Maxwell were to be thus treated?'

Application from Mrs. Hertzog's father, Mr. Neethling, for her release was entirely refused.

'Strange, is it not, as we look back, to note the turn of time's wheel. As I write, that delicate baby boy, reared by his grandparents, is now a student at Oxford, while Mrs. Hertzog is taking the leading place as wife of the Prime Minister of the Union. For many, however, things have not turned out so well, and health was wrecked and lives lost that might have been saved by the application of even that one concession had it been given in practice as well as in principle.'

Finding that little real change was being effected by the direct appeal to the Government, it was decided that extracts

¹ See Appendix for full text of suggestions and correspondence.

from Miss Hobhouse's letters from the camps (of which many have been given in Chapter VI) should be printed and circulated to members of both Houses of Parliament.

'Instantly,' she writes, 'the sentiment of the country was aroused, and had it been allowed its true expression, not only would the camps then and there have been adequately reformed, but very possibly the war would also have dwindled in popularity and been ended. Wishing to take advantage of this wave of sentiment, my Committee hired the Queen's Hall, arranging that I should speak. The Bishop of Hereford promised to take the Chair, the Hall was secured and the tickets sold, when – imagine! the authorities got behind the scenes and pulled the wires so that the lessor of the Hall broke his contract. He still owes us for the expenses we had incurred.'

The same thing happened with Westminster Chapel and was the signal for an outburst of abuse in the Press.

But if a portion of the Press were roused to fury at criticism of the English methods of warfare, there were not wanting other voices, whose true love of their country made them indignant at what was being done in her name. Perhaps the most noteworthy was the intervention of Field-Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain, who more than once denounced what was going on. In a long letter to the *Manchester Guardian* of 6th August 1901, protesting against the cruelties of farm-burning, he says:

'The conditions and the suffering of which Miss Hobhouse assures us she was witness ought to be enough to make it impossible for them ever to be

repeated. It surely can never become a recognized episode in war for wives to be forcibly torn from their homes and to know not what had become of their children; for women about to become mothers to be forced into railway trucks and to have to travel tedious journeys and then remain in camps devoid of the comforts needed for maternity; for women and children to be sent to live in bare tents, and often exposed to sleeping on the wet ground or to be drenched under leaky tents; or for mothers to see their little ones dwindle and die for the want of suitable nourishment. Such have been the events which Miss Hobhouse states have taken place, and the order which brought them about was planned and carried out with culpable disregard of such results. What would be the indignation in the United Kingdom if anything approaching to such miseries were enacted by an invading army in our own country, where even the nests of birds are under the protection of law? Admitted that measures have lately been taken to remedy many of the evils that formerly beset the Concentration Camps, still the suffering and the indignity have had to be endured, and cannot now be white-washed.'

A great deal of newspaper correspondence appeared, taken up with such matters as the home remedies used by the Boers for their children which were fastened upon by some critics as proving that they were responsible for the deaths in the camps, and the Duke of Wellington's scorn of taking a bath, as 'only fit for a feather-bed soldier' was invoked to show that such superfluous cleanliness may not be necessary to health! It was apt to be forgotten that

women of all classes were inmates of the camps, and there were most ignorant as well as most excellent mothers.

An extract from a personal letter from Lord Ripon of 22nd July 1901 is worth quoting, as showing how much he attributed to Miss Hobhouse's efforts:

'The work is really done and done by you alone. Everything may not be as we wish in the camps, but their principal evils have been checked.'

On 26th July 1901 Emily Hobhouse wrote as follows to Mr. Brodrick:

July 26, 1901

DEAR MR. BRODRICK, — When we parted on the 18th you promised to send me a letter giving the reasons why you could not allow me to return to my work in South Africa. Such a letter has not reached me, and I hope you will forgive me if I rather urgently press that it should be immediately sent. I am continually asked on all sides when I am going out again. It is generally expected I shall soon start, which is, indeed, my own desire. Since you have adopted, in principle, almost all my recommendations, I can scarcely think any ground of objection can be regarded as tenable against a proposal to resume work, the results of which have been accepted by yourself. It has occurred to me that you might say that any help on my part was unnecessary, because you have yourself selected certain ladies to visit and report upon the Concentration Camps. In relation to this, may I be permitted to urge that the number you have sent is really quite insufficient for

the work entrusted to them, considering the largely increased number of refugees now found in the camps, unless they have supplementary assistance; that they must spend much time and labour before they will have acquired the preliminary knowledge necessary for useful action; and, if I may speak for myself, that my experience in the camps, my acquaintance with the people, and to some extent with their language, ought to enable me, and I trust would enable me, to be a useful auxiliary to them in the discharge of their duties? I would fain hope that the delay in sending your letter may mean a disposition to reconsider my appeal for leave to revisit the camps in South Africa. In spite of improvements that have been made, there is much suffering and misery still wanting alleviation, and I do most earnestly press you to grant me permission to return at the earliest possible moment to the work in which I have become so deeply interested. — I have, etc.

EMILY HOBHOUSE

to which the following reply was received:

WAR OFFICE,

July 27, 1901.

DEAR MISS HOBHOUSE, — I am sorry if there has been any delay in writing you a letter on the subject which, with others, you mentioned when I saw you on the 18th, but as I was forced to refer to the matter publicly in reply to questions in the House of Commons, I hoped I had done what was necessary to explain the action of the Government. The only considerations

which have guided the Government in their selection of ladies to visit the Concentration Camps, beyond their special capacity for such work, was that they should be, so far as is possible, removed from the suspicion of partiality to the system adopted or the reverse. I pointed out to you that for this reason the Government had been forced to decline the services of ladies representing various philanthropic agencies, whose presence in an unofficial capacity would be a difficulty in camps controlled by Government organization. It would have been impossible for the Government to accept your services in this capacity while declining others, the more so as your reports and speeches have been made the subject of so much controversy; and I regret, therefore, we cannot alter the decision which I conveyed to you on the 18th instant. — Yours, etc.,

ST. JOHN BRODRICK

The refusal of leave to return was made more bitter to Emily Hobhouse by the fact that two of the ladies selected as members of the Ladies' Commission referred to above, had expressed themselves strongly in favour of the Camp system, which gave colour to her natural feeling that 'my opinions were discounted and barely tolerated because I was known to feel sorry for the sickly children, and to have shown *personal* sympathy to broken, destitute Boer women in their *personal* troubles. Sympathy shown to any of Dutch blood is the one unpardonable sin in South Africa.'¹

Which truth, *mutatis mutandis*, is discovered afresh in every war. Justice, love and all Christian virtues shown to

¹ *Nineteenth Century* for October 1901.

the momentary 'enemy' are always exposed as disloyalty, if nothing worse.

It must be regretted that the Commission of ladies which sailed in July did not get in touch with Miss Hobhouse, though Mrs. Fawcett had the opportunity, which she could not accept, of meeting her.

They began a journey of investigation, but all the time the death rate was rising, and Emily Hobhouse, miserable at the thought of the children dying whilst she was impotent to help, wrote 'in a white heat of feeling,' as she says, an open letter to Mr. Brodrick, giving these very significant passages:

'If we leave for the present the coloured camps and speak only of the white people, the returns show that the population of the camps has increased gradually during June, July, and August from 85,000 to 105,000 souls. In the past month of August 1,878 deaths occurred among the whites, of which 1,545 were children. The total number of deaths for the three months for which we have returns is 4,067, of which 3,245 were children. We have no account of the hundreds who passed away in the first six months of this year and part of last year. What is there to indicate the probability of any abatement in this fearful mortality? The cold winter nights are happily passing away, but rains are falling in many parts, and the increasing heat will bring sicknesses of other kinds. Scurvy has appeared. Daily the children are dying, and unless the rate be checked a few months will suffice to see the extermination of the majority.

'Will nothing be done? Will no prompt measures be

taken to deal with this terrible evil? Three months ago I tried to place the matter strongly before you, and begged permission to organize immediate alleviatory measures, based on the experience I had acquired, in order thus to avert a mortality I had plainly seen was increasing. My request was refused, and thus experience which I could not pass on to others rendered useless. The repulse to myself would have mattered nothing, had only a large band of kindly workers been instantly despatched with full powers to deal with each individual camp as its needs required. The necessity was instant if innocent human lives were to be saved. Instead, we had to wait a month while six ladies were chosen. During that month 576 children died. The preparation and journey of these ladies occupied another month, and in that interval 1,124 more children succumbed. In place of at once proceeding to the great centres of high mortality, the bulk of yet a third month seems to have been spent in their long journey to Mafeking, and in passing a few days at some of the healthier camps. Meanwhile 1,545 more children died. This was not immediate action; it was very deliberate inquiry, and that, too, at a time when death, which is unanswerable, was at work; nay, when the demands of death, instead of diminishing, were increasing. Will you not now, with the thought before you of those 3,245 children who have closed their eyes for ever since I last saw you, on their behalf, will you not now take instant action, and endeavour thus to avert the evil results of facts patent to all, and suspend further inquiry into the truth of what the whole world knows?’

At last when the findings of the Commission had been received, the rations increased, and the camps handed over to the civilian authorities under Mr. Chamberlain's efficient control, a real improvement in their condition was effected and the death-rate greatly diminished.

The interview which perhaps most encouraged Emily Hobhouse was that with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, which shall be told from his biography.¹

'Always deeply sensitive to the sufferings of women and children, he was greatly moved by the appeals which had been made to him on this subject, with constantly increasing urgency, from the beginning of the year onwards. The same steamer which brought Sir Alfred Milner from South Africa brought also Miss Emily Hobhouse, a zealous and intrepid lady who had obtained permission to visit the Concentration Camps as delegate of the Distress Fund for South African women and children; and she came to him in the second week of June, bringing her Report and Diary. "The interview," says Miss Hobhouse, "remains vivid in my mind. Of all whom I saw at that time, deeply interested as they were, he alone, greatly occupied as he was, seemed to have the leisure and the determination to hear and understand everything. For nearly two hours he listened with rapt attention, now and then putting a question to elucidate a point. He left the impression of a man who spared no time or pains to arrive at truth, and in whom wisdom and humanity were paramount."

¹ *Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, G.C.B.*, by J. A. Spender, 1923, p. 335 *et seq.*

'The same week he was guest at a dinner given by the National Reform Union at the Holborn Restaurant. . . . Campbell-Bannerman, replying to the toast of "Our Guests," said . . . "What was this policy of unconditional surrender? It was that now we had got the men we had been fighting against down, we should punish them as severely as possible, devastate their country, burn their homes, break up their very instruments of agriculture and destroy the machinery by which food was produced. It was that we should sweep – as the Spaniards did in Cuba, and how we denounced the Spaniards – the women and children into camps in which they were destitute of all the decencies and comforts and many of the necessities of life, and in some of which the death-rate rose so high as 430 in the 1,000. . . . He did not say for a moment because he did not think for a moment that this was the deliberate and intentional policy of His Majesty's Government, but it was the policy of the writers in the Press who supported them, and at all events it was the thing that was being done at that moment in the name and by the authority of this most humane and christian nation. On the previous day he asked the leader of the House of Commons when the information would be afforded of which we were so badly in need. His request was refused. Mr. Balfour treated them to a short disquisition on the nature of war. A phrase often used was that "war is war," but when one came to ask about it, one was told that no war was going on, that it was not war. When was a war not a war? When it was carried on by Methods of Barbarism in South Africa.'

'He had meant exactly what he said, neither more or

less, and on fit occasion he would repeat it. Repeat it he did three days later in the House of Commons, when Mr. Lloyd George moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the question of the Concentration Camps and Miss Hobhouse's Report, which by now had become public property.

"It is the whole system I consider, to use a word I have already applied to it, barbarous. . . . What I object to is the whole policy of concentration, the whole policy of destroying the homes of women and children, involving them in circumstances of considerable cruelty. . . ."

"That he had done for himself, that he could never be Prime Minister or long remain the Leader of any Party that respected itself, was the loudly expressed opinion of the man in the train and the City. "Methods of Barbarism" passed from mouth to mouth, quenching all argument, stamping the verdict with finality. He bore it with his usual philosophy and positively chuckled over the anonymous letters which poured in upon him, declaring various kinds of painful death to be too good for his iniquities.

". . . The difference between the responsibilities of those who prescribed a "method" and those who executed it under orders was the one point on which he continued to make public explanations.

"One day, eight years later, I found myself talking over these events with General Botha. . . . Just as I was leaving he stopped me for a moment and said: "After all, three words made peace and union in South Africa: 'Methods of Barbarism.'" Softening the epigram a little, he went on to speak of the tremendous

impression which had been made upon men fighting a losing battle with an apparently hopeless future by the fact that the leader of one of the great English parties had had the courage to say this thing, and to brave the obloquy which it brought upon him. So far from encouraging them to a hopeless resistance, it touched their hearts and made them think seriously of the possibility of reconciliation.'

We may note that Miss Hobhouse's campaign was not unappreciated in some audiences, as shown by the following fact narrated by the *Manchester Guardian* of 2nd November 1901, speaking of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's speech at Bath:

'Speaking with more freedom and animation than was his wont, Sir Henry delivered a trenchant attack on the Government with regard to the Concentration Camps. First, he paid a tribute to Miss Hobhouse, the mention of whose name moved the audience to a remarkable demonstration, ladies and gentlemen rising and cheering her for several moments. "That noble lady," Sir Henry called her, "who had the honour of having first called public attention to the matter, and who has now been further honoured by being expelled from South Africa." The cheering which followed showed that on this subject at least, the Liberal Party as represented at that meeting is in entire accord.'

To return to the story of the summer of 1901, we turn to extracts from Emily Hobhouse's narrative:

'To me it is clear as the weeks passed on that it was the publication of the facts in the two Houses of Parlia-

ment which had so angered the Government. Had I *not* done so probably they would have let me return to the camps. On the other hand, would they (without the public stimulus) ever have made the supreme efforts necessary for the reformation of the camps and for bringing them up to the level safe for the White-washing Commission to visit and report on them. My Uncle believed not, and though, inexperienced in governmental ways as I then was I sometimes wavered in opinion, I have long since ceased to have any doubt but that the line I was advised to take was the best to effect the good we so desired for the people concerned.'

An entry from Darlington on 20th July reads:

'Last night I was not allowed a hearing. A large audience of quiet, thoughtful people had gathered and sat patiently waiting, and we on the platform sat and patiently faced them while twelve or fifteen organized roughs sat in a group and howled and sang for one and a half hours. The policy of non-resistance prevailed in this Quaker town, so they were not interfered with. We simply sat, and they (the audience) sat – and perfect order prevailed. Mrs. Backhouse and Lady Dale were not allowed to speak, and, of course, I never even stood up. So Lady Dale said she would have a meeting next morning in her own house.'

It may be noted that many of the meetings addressed during this summer by Emily Hobhouse were held in the local Friends' Meeting-houses, as other halls were often refused her, or cancelled at the last moment.

Writing on 24th July, she chronicles having spoken at :

'Twenty-six meetings from June 25th to July 23rd – of these only three were rowdy, and out of three, two heard me through! . . . Their general character was orderly, interested and moved – tears I often saw. It was a feature of them that at most places the majority of the audience filed past the platform to shake hands with me. The meetings resulted in a good flow of money to the Committee.'

'A few quiet days at Charlton House were most soothing after the *Sturm und Drang* of these varied months. Great was the love and sympathy awaiting me there. But it could not be for long. I was whirled round and round the country continually needing to return to London for interviews, etc. While North, Lady Ripon invited me to spend a few days with them at Studley Royal, and much I enjoyed that repose, the beauty of Fountains Abbey and above all, the advantage of long quiet talks with Lord Ripon.'

Ever since leaving South Africa, her friends there had constantly written to her in most warm appreciation of what she had done, and hoping for her return to continue the work. For instance, Mrs. Charles Murray, an unfailing supporter and friend at Cape Town, speaking of the work already accomplished, says:

'Of its value I don't think *you* are at all capable of judging *yourself*. I have always found that those who have really done the noblest work and the most lasting in its results are those who have most keenly felt its deficiencies and the apparent failure of their own highest aims. The difficulties of your task no one can

realize, but those who have been in some way or other engaged in the work out here – I feel that we, small party of English South Africans, owe you perhaps the deepest debt of gratitude of all, for you have helped, more than you can ever estimate, to restore the old ideals of English character which it has been such pain to see shattered. All you have gone through seems like the preparation for a wider work still, which will reveal itself to you as you go on. I think by far the hardest part of any good work one attempts to do is that it is impossible to avoid being misunderstood or giving pain to some whom one can in many ways like and admire. Most people live only on the surface of life and are the *unconscious* instruments of good or evil in the hands of the few who really think and plan and sway the conscience of most as they will. To go counter to this wave of popular opinion means a struggle for which few are fitted, and therefore one cannot but find many well-meaning people considering you as an enemy.'

And Mr. Jan Hofmeyr, the well-known South African statesman, wrote in July 1901:

'My wife and I never knew that you had come to South Africa before we read the extracts from your report in the *Daily News*. You have indeed done noble and effective work – you have let a ray of light and hope into many a depressed and desperate heart. Both my wife and I thank you for what you have done for our poor countrywomen and their little children.'

The contrast between such warm-hearted sympathy and the antagonism and coldness received at home not unnatur-

ally tended to embitter Emily Hobhouse and make her impatient of difficulties. Yet the feeling roused by her protests was an inevitable part of the psychology of war. In the unnatural temper of mind generated by war fever and violent press propaganda, anyone who sees the cold facts of cruelty for which their country is responsible is an outlaw. To see facts in their proper colouring and not through the spectacles which show everything 'enemy' as pure black and everything else pure white, is inevitably a crime. On the one hand was the idea of military necessity before which everything must bow, and on the other was the realization of the claims of human personality everywhere, irrespective of class, race or colour.

The Great War has made us very much habituated to suffering on a grand scale, yet even with this vividly in mind, it is impossible to read unmoved the story of the sorrows of the Boer women during the war of 1899-1902. It may be now impossible to prove every individual fact, and different points of view are reflected in different accounts of the same event, yet reading a great number of stories from both sides leaves on one's mind inevitably the impression of grave sufferings and terrible hardships.

CHAPTER IX

ARREST AND DEPORTATION

1901

THE arrest of Miss Hobhouse on her arrival at Cape Town in October 1901 and her deportation to England aroused widespread attention and discussion at the time.

Let us endeavour therefore to put the case as impartially as possible. Miss Hobhouse had asked leave from the British Government to return to the Concentration Camps in South Africa. This was refused, but no reference was made to other parts of the country. Miss Hobhouse determined, despite the possible personal risks, to go to South Africa. Naturally, as she herself says, she had no intention of attempting to force her way back to the Camps, but as all her friends understood, she hoped to be able to continue her work of reforming their conditions more effectively in Cape Colony. Whilst at sea, martial law was proclaimed in Cape Colony, and she was arrested on board the *Avondale Castle*, not allowed to land, but ordered to return at once. Ill, overstrained, without any capable advisers, and feeling the importance of her actions from the point of view of the principle of individual liberty, she decided to refuse, and resist immediate deportation, begging instead for a land prison. An eyewitness's account shows that volunteer nurses were brought by the military authorities to bring her to the returning ship, but to them Miss Hobhouse made an earnest appeal not to touch her, to which they twice yielded and left

her. The authorities then sent stretcher bearers, who, despite her struggles, forcibly carried her to the other ship. Miss Hobhouse entreated help from the Captain, but though he agreed to her appeal that he should be present, he assured her that he was absolutely powerless to help her.

Such, briefly, appear to be the facts, and it should be remembered that there are two separate problems involved, viz. the wisdom of the actions of the Government and those of Miss Hobhouse. According to the respective values placed by each reader upon unlimited autocratic power, called martial law, or upon personal freedom and liberty, will be his judgment upon the right of the British Government to act as it did. The reader's judgment on Miss Hobhouse's own conduct will be helped by hearing the story from her contemporary account, from which he will best be able to understand the experience as it presented itself to her. If her actions be deemed undignified, it must in fairness be borne in mind, that not only was she overwrought by long-continued strain, but she was firmly, though erroneously, under the impression that if she did not offer physical resistance, she would be held to have acquiesced in the proceeding.

Miss Hobhouse writes:

'Having definitely decided upon my journey and having found acquiescence in it from a number of my best advisers, I cut short my visit to Studley Royal and hurried to London for final arrangements. Being much out of health I longed for the rest of the voyage and for the sunshine of the Cape. But it seemed prudent to take a companion, and I did so in the shape of a young and capable nurse, Miss Phillips, whose skill

would later, I felt sure, be of utmost value in the shortage of nurses throughout the country.

'We sailed in the *Avondale Castle*, an intermediate slow vessel, on October 5th.'

Writing to her brother from Table Bay on 29th October:

'There seems much to tell of feelings and experiences, if not of facts, since our arrival here on Sunday, the 27th. We dropped anchor as the clock struck 4 p.m. and we were all dressed and ready to go ashore, ready with the readiness of those who had been twenty-two days at sea, grinding along with an asthmatic engine against strong currents and head winds.

'All was calm and lovely as we glided into the Bay and our spirits were at boiling-point. Of course, we had to wait for pratique, but when the steam tug came out alongside of us I saw with horror the khaki in it, and knew at once the worst had come. They boarded us and the officer sat in the smoking room and proceeded to examine every single individual of the four hundred and fifty passengers. Our spirits sank. No possibility of going ashore that night, and sorrowfully we unpacked again. Presently it came to my turn, and then the officer, when he had digested my name, informed me that he would prefer taking me at the very end of all. From this I argued no good, but I bowed and withdrew, still expecting only a more detailed and searching examination. It was a long business. Not till the dinner bell rang did he come to me and say he wished to speak to me. Crowds of people were everywhere, and there was no square inch of quietness. I took him to the Captain's cabin, for I had an instinctive turning

to the Captain at that moment as the only man to stand by me. He welcomed us in and was himself withdrawing when the officer stopped him, saying that the matter concerned him also. He [the officer] then turned to me, and informed me I was placed under arrest, that I should not be allowed to land in South Africa *anywhere*, and that I was to hold no communication with anyone on shore by word or letter. I drew up and asked him from whom he had received such an order, and he replied from Colonel C., Military Commander of Cape Town. I further asked from whom did the Colonel receive such instructions, and he replied he could say no more. Then he turned to the Captain, who looked horridly miserable, for we are very good friends, and said I was placed in his charge and he would be held responsible for me. He was to see I did not leave the ship nor hold communication with anyone.

'Next he gave me the alternative of returning home by the *Carisbrook* on the Wednesday, or of remaining where I was. I replied that to return by the *Carisbrook* was out of the question, for I felt quite wholly unfit for another long voyage. I then asked if he would take letters for me to the Commandant and the Governor, etc., and this he agreed to, promising to call for them when he came to finish the ship in the morning.

'Altogether I kept my head fairly well, but I was so taken aback that I could hardly at the moment think what it was best to do. Then I had to keep up and walk down to dinner calm and unconcerned, though through the Purser the news had flashed through the ship in a second. However, I was just able to chatter merrily

all dinner time, and then after I went and poured myself out to Miss S. She was intensely astonished and angry, and truly sympathized. A good type of the average English view that we are all right and everything is going pretty well, this was her first lesson in the sort of things really being done in South Africa, and she was horrified. We had made great friends, and though she had before embarking had the usual newspaper view of me, she had been quite turned round to see and understand me as I am. With her help I wrote four letters – to Milner, Kitchener, Hely Hutchinson and Colonel C. She agreed with me that it was my duty to stay and fight the point, and that it would never do to turn round and meekly obey them by going home. All night I lay awake shuddering from head to foot with the effects of the shock, for oddly enough it was a shock and unexpected in that form. Then I began to see my way and brace myself to the battle.

‘I shall be very polite, very dignified, but in every way I possibly can, a thorn in the flesh to them. I see already many ways of being a thorn. For instance *they* don’t want it much talked of in Cape Town, and I mean that it shall be. We are to move into dock as soon as the gale subsides, and I shall at once demand a guard; partly because it is extremely disagreeable for Captain B. to be my gaoler, and partly that the guard is their witness that I keep the rules laid down. Most of all because I understand they don’t want to do it because of making it conspicuous. I know soldiers hate guarding women. I also mean to refuse to return to England until such time as I myself feel willing and able, unless of course, they send me under force of

arms. I shall not move a limb in that direction. If the *Avondale* unloads immediately she will be able to continue her voyage in ten days' time, and then they must find another prison for me.

'I have already petitioned all the authorities for a *land* prison; rocking out here in the cold is awful, and I cannot sleep.

'It would be too ludicrous if it were not for the great tragedy of which it is one little outcome. Anyhow, I think they will find me a bore, polite, but a bore, before we have done. I felt happier when I had made up my mind what course to steer. The Captain who, though by no means a political sympathizer, likes me personally, is acting most courteously in a trying position. He is very angry and thinks it great cheek of them to have used his ship as a prison and himself as a gaoler.

'One immediate result of the affair has been that every one who avoided or disapproved of me before has now turned round in my favour.

'The first day of my imprisonment seemed very long. It was exasperating to see all the others land and to stay out tossing oneself in the south-easter. So I began to sketch and did two little oils of Table Mountain and the Lion's Head. I could not read. To-day we were to have gone into dock, but the gale was too strong, so I managed another sketch – a big panorama scene of the whole group of mountains. The wind was terrific, but I pinned my paper on to the deck itself and did it lying down. The Captain calls me "Napoleon in St. Helena."

'I bethought me to-day of other cases of imprisonment in our family, but so far can only think of Hugh Hob-

house of Bristol, imprisoned for Quakerism about 1660, and, of course, old Bishop Trelawny. I wonder if 20,000 Englishmen "will know the reason why" about poor me!

'So to-day, finding Macaulay in the library, I read up the whole story of his little difference with the Government, hoping to get some wrinkles for my own guidance. And I found one at least. Those seven good Bishops refused to pay for their keep in the Tower, and I shall refuse to pay my keep on board this ship. It is ten shillings a day. Here I see another way of being a bore. Also, if they send me home, Government must pay my passage. I find that it is the rule of the Company in cases of undesirables who may not land. And so has ended my second day.

'I forgot to say that I asked if Nurse might land, and [the Lieutenant] replied, "Probably, but she must be searched." Captain and I both laughed so at this, that he looked very silly.

¹'This letter, after all, was putting the best face on it. The shock to my whole system was far greater than I myself knew. To find Martial Law at the Cape could be no great surprise, for it had been long talked of, so long indeed, that I had perhaps ceased to expect it. It was disagreeable and would make one's work difficult but no more. The shock was to find oneself – a law-abiding, free Englishwoman – arrested and imprisoned. Brought up as we were in strict obedience to law and enjoying freedom as the breath of life – this illegality stunned me. No warrant for my arrest was produced and no reason assigned. In vain I asked for

¹ End of contemporary letter and resumption of autobiography.

the reason. A quarter of a century has passed but none has ever been given, the explanation being that there was none to give.

'My great comfort in that unequal contest – which could only end in the momentary triumph of Injustice and Force – was the exquisite sympathy and affection poured out to me by my group of Cape Town friends, some of whom succeeded in overcoming official prohibition and in coming to visit me bearing fruit and flowers. Without their sustaining help I think I should never have got through. Another source of help was the beauty of the Bay and the majesty of Table Mountain which provided a feeling of strength and security in this uncertainty of things, both physical and moral, while the ship rocked in the south-easterly gale and the principles in which one had been nourished tottered to their fall.

'It was a truly horrible return voyage. To begin with it was a troopship [with a large number of] men on board. The dirt and disorder were indescribable, and the *smell* sickening. It overpowered me to faintness when I was carried in and laid on my bunk. We heard later that it had carried a cargo of rotten onions. The Captain was not master, he told me, in his own ship. Military rule was there, too, and of a kind that did not know the importance of cleanliness on a vessel. There were only two women on board – officers' wives – and they never spoke to me. Never did a ship roll so terribly. Recovery seemed impossible, and the only respite, the few hours' rest at St. Vincent. Nurse Phillips was my only comfort. The cold was dreadful as we came north, for we had no winter clothes with us. We had gone to pass

a summer at the Cape, and were now plunged unexpectedly into winter.'

'A cable awaited me at St. Vincent, perhaps the sweetest I ever received. For the value of a message is relative to the condition of the recipient. It was just one word from my aunt of welcome to her home, but it was the first sign from England that the news of this military tyranny was known. My Cape Town friends had tried to cable, but we had no certainty that the Censors had let it through. You can imagine, too, how grateful I was when at last we reached Southampton to find those kindest friends the Courtneys and Miss Bradby. They had come down from London to meet me. It was a wonderful act of kindness on the part of an old man like Mr. Courtney. But indeed all my friends had been full of kindness, and most tenderly apprehensive for my welfare. They had been waiting three weeks in anxiety and suspense, getting no news of what was happening. Not knowing, therefore, in what condition I might be, or if even free to land in the ordinary way, they had consulted as to whether a solicitor should meet me, or, as the Courtneys urged, some well-known man like himself – and he offered to go. In the end it was so decided, and thankful indeed I was to see him come on board. Besides the obvious advantage, it was a protection from the crowd of pressmen and would-be interviewers, and the three made an escort for me and Nurse, taking us through the crowd to a quiet hotel room where we could rest and talk till the train started. I was so weak – forty-eight days on shipboard – worn out, nerve-racked, still prostrate

from the shock, exhausted too from inability to eat the bad ship food in that condition, I could not give them a very lucid account. Few understood how greatly my health had suffered from a shock of which to this day I feel the effects. Perhaps only now, as I read over their old letters, do I fully realize the anxiety felt in England on my account, not only – as would be natural – by my brother and uncle, but by others with whom I had worked or who had known me. And their perturbation was – as I wished it to be – as much a matter of anxiety for the public honour (right) as for my welfare, which was indeed quite a secondary interest. Foremost amongst these was Lord Ripon. The South African Press had (under censorship) given almost no news of my arrest, and I had been forbidden to communicate with the shore. Hence it was at first quite impossible for me to send word to England. But on the third day, when the ship came into dock [at Cape Town] and one or two of my friends had courageously secured permission to see me, Alice Greene most kindly promised to try and send a cable in cypher, and this she did. My friends could not understand why I myself was silent. They had never lived under Martial Law. Miss Greene dared not risk more than one word lest the cable should not get through. Further, I wrote to Lord Hobhouse and Lord Ripon, trusting that, as peers, their letters would not be interfered with, and these I managed to get posted by the kindness of a ship's officer to catch the outgoing mail. I had not been prohibited from communicating with England, but the censorship was so strict that I dared not write plainly, only allusively; consequently these letters, which

reached England on 18th November, were perhaps more puzzling than enlightening.

“It is a relief,” wrote Lord Ripon, 5th November, “to find that it is deportation, not imprisonment. The deportation will not hurt Miss Hobhouse and may do the cause good.”

‘Meanwhile my Uncle had done all in his power. He was deeply concerned from private, but still more from public considerations. He was very old – 82 – and only a few days earlier he had resigned his seat on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, to which he had given so many years of devoted and unremunerative service. ‘On my return, my Uncle advised me to see no one, but quietly to write down the exact sequence of events while fresh in my mind. Being very prostrate I found this very hard. But I did it in the form of a “Letter” to my Committee, and after submission to him and to Lord Ripon, Frederic Harrison and others, it was communicated to the entire Press with a covering letter, written by my Uncle himself. It went sorely against the grain for him to write, but he felt so keenly the infringement of liberty as a matter of first-class public importance that it was a duty he would not shirk though the wrong had been applied to one of his own name. It did, I believe, bring him considerable criticism, which to some at least, seemed grossly unfair. I find a note to him from Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, later Colonial Secretary, expressing his strong disapproval of the attitude of the Conservatives towards him.’

Lord Hobhouse’s letter to the papers, already mentioned by his niece, is so pointed a statement that it must be given

here. Lord Hobhouse was a lawyer of wide experience, and it is far more than an uncle's support of his niece. Indeed, the whole question of principle has been brought into much greater importance by the experiences of the European War.

'SIR, My niece, Miss Emily Hobhouse, writes to you a letter explanatory of the incidents relating to her seizure in Cape Town and deportation to England. Can you find space to append to it some remarks from my point of view?

'No power on earth can prevent the case from being publicly discussed, and that process may be rendered more intelligent by a temperate statement of facts and an indication of the great principles upon which they bear.

'Miss Hobhouse does not enter upon any political question, except so far as the attack on her liberty is itself a political question. It may, with other attacks on other people, become one if the law is found unequal to protect private individuals against orders which persons in command of the organized forces of the country, and therefore physically masters of it, may take into their heads to issue. Every reasonable effort will be made to bring this case to the calm arbitrament of law. And I say no more on that side of it now, except that I believe the treatment accorded to her has no warrant of law to support it. But suppose I am wrong. Suppose it to be the law that the Crown (i.e. the Minister for the time being in office) has power, on its own allegation of military necessity, to declare "martial law," and that no court of justice can inquire whether such necessity really exists, what law do we live under? There is

no difference in this respect between a Colony and England. Is it the case that the Crown can abrogate all existing laws in any given area, and place the persons and property of its inhabitants at the discretion of some soldier who happens to be in command there and then, one who may be an able and thoughtful man, such as Lord Kitchener, or may be an inexperienced subaltern who takes action pending orders from a superior? The great Duke of Wellington, who saw into the heart of practical matters with as true insight as was ever given to man, has told us that "martial law" (other than the law applicable to military forces) is no law at all; it is the will of a man who has force at his disposal. No lawyer that I can discover has ever told us anything so full and so true about that military dictatorship which we have called by the misleading name of "martial law." Such is the general notion of it. Such is the practical working of it. Its results on the large scale, when passions run high, are such as no man likes to contemplate or read about. In Miss Hobhouse's case, passions have not run high, and the consequences, though injurious, are not grave; but the principle that underlies it is just as momentous as in any other case of military dictatorship. Taking her account as correct, all her remonstrances were met by the one magic formula: Why am I prevented from joining my friends? — Martial Law. Why should I submit to be examined by a strange doctor instead of my own? — Martial Law. What right have you to set those nurses upon me? — Martial Law. By what authority do you take me from one ship to another? — Martial Law. What offence have I committed? — Martial Law. The

poor officers, indeed, said all they could, and it is all quite logical on the theory that the will of the commander is the law. But then it shows in a strong light what, on nearer acquaintance, this sort of law is: how it may reign paramount over the minutiae of life, according as one thing or another is convenient for the officer on the spot. Doubtless in other cases, where immediate action is necessary, the officer on the spot acts as he thinks best; but only subject to the ultimate judgment of a court of justice as to the right or wrong of what is done. I would urge my countrymen to fix their attention on these principles, which lie at the very root of the division between free and despotic institutions. If the law is, as the authorities contend, constitutional, questions familiar to our forefathers, but unfamiliar to us, will soon arise. And, seeing how very long a time it takes to inform large multitudes as to the value of an abstract principle not yet violated in their own persons, they cannot begin a day too soon.¹

‘Yours, etc.

‘HOBHOUSE

‘15, BRUTON STREET, W.

December 3rd, 1901.’

We cannot here enter into all the details of the consideration of what steps could be taken to obtain legal redress. Solicitors were consulted and application made to the War Office to instruct their solicitor to appear on behalf of the proposed action against the officers in South Africa who were responsible for the arrest. But after long delay, Mr.

¹ From the *Memoir of Lord Hobhouse*, by L. T. Hobhouse, and J. L. Hammond, p. 230, published by Edward Arnold, 1905.

Brodrick, Minister for War, refused service of the writ. The matter was taken up by a group of M.P.'s, amongst whom were Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Lord Bryce, Mr. Mackarness, Sir William Harcourt, all now deceased, and Mr. (now Lord) Shaw of Dunfermline. Eventually the question was laid before five Counsel for their opinion, which was to the effect that 'in view of the certain passage of an Act of Indemnity covering the proceedings complained of by Miss Hobhouse, not only would the action be defeated, but the attempt to obtain an authoritative or useful decision on Martial Law would prove abortive.' Miss Hobhouse was advised by her friends to accept this opinion, and no legal proceedings therefore were instituted.

CHAPTER X

TALLOIRES AND SOUTH AFRICA AGAIN

1902

COUNTERBALANCING the heated antagonism which was expressed in the deportation of Miss Hobhouse from South Africa, was a great deal of cordial support from very thoughtful and often very distinguished men and women. Some of these showed their admiration and respect by joining in a dinner given in her honour at the New Reform Club – the first time, it was said, that such an honour had been accorded to a woman – under the presidency of Mr. C. P. Scott, then and now the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, and an unfailing champion of her efforts at reform, and, indeed, of countless other important unpopular causes.

Shortly afterwards, in April 1902, Emily Hobhouse went to stay at Talloires, on Lake Annecy, where, as the solitary visitor to the place, she found quiet in delightful surroundings, to enable her to write her book – *The Brunt of the War*, a very detailed account of the sufferings of the women and children in South Africa, in the farm-burnings, the Concentration Camps, and elsewhere. It contains numerous statistics and large numbers of personal statements of the sufferers, the testimony of British soldiers as to the cruelties inherent in the policy of farm-burning, as well as detailed comments on the official reports on the Concentration Camps, all of which entailed a great deal of work and

correspondence. On her journey to Talloires, Miss Hobhouse paid visits to some of her South African friends who were staying in Holland or Belgium, Mrs. Louis Botha and Abraham Fischer, from the latter of whom she was delighted to receive word of a warm message of appreciation of her work for South Africa from President Steyn. During her stay, news arrived of the eagerly longed-for peace concluded between Great Britain and the Boers, and Emily Hobhouse, whilst entering fully into sympathy with the latter in their loss of independence, yet rejoiced with all her heart at the cessation of warfare and the release from the long and cruel strain.

A few weeks later, three of the Boer Generals, Botha, de la Rey, and de Wet came to England for the purpose of pleading for help for their ruined fellow-countrymen. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Percy Molteno, Emily Hobhouse was enabled to go with his sister, Mrs. Murray, to welcome them on their arrival at Southampton, and she thus describes the occasion:

‘We, Mrs. Murray and I, went out on the Company’s tug to meet the *Saxon*; it was a lovely sight as the great vessel slowly emerged from the silvery morning haze and towered above us in our little tug. I was thus the first English person to welcome them to English soil as they stood at the top of the gangway with their staff to receive us, while hundreds of khakies who crowded the ship, looked on. They are a striking trio. Each is so different from the other. Botha is a kingly person with very courtly manners and commanding air; de la Rey a patriarch, very gentle and quiet; de Wet is impressive. His face is enigmatical but stamped with the re-

sponsibility and the sorrow of the war. . . . I felt they were not merely great soldiers but great men. They are very simple and direct, and their dignity astonished and to some extent rebuked.'

Having refused to accompany Mr. Chamberlain to a Naval Review, the Generals came back from their interview with him and

'we all went up to town together in a saloon carriage. I sat between Botha and de Wet with de la Rey opposite, and there were Mrs. de la Rey and the Chaplain and staff, and Miss Molteno [who had arrived by the same ship and] Mrs. Murray.

'It is very different meeting these men to meeting the women folk. These make you understand the ruin of their land and people and what it means to the *men* of the country to have seen the women so treated. The women themselves would turn off their troubles with an "I don't care," or an occasional joke — not so the men. It has created in them a feeling stronger than any I was ever brought in contact with. I had a long talk with them again on Sunday when they came back from their visit to the King.'

Although there was plenty to keep her occupied in England, Emily Hobhouse was more and more drawn to the idea of another journey to South Africa, realizing fully that peace did not mean plenty, and that construction is a far slower and more difficult business than destruction. After a holiday in Paris, she began preparations for the journey, and left England in April 1903, arriving at Cape Town on 12th May.

On the voyage her identity was fairly well concealed, but she wrote to her sister-in-law to report

‘a conquest of the Chief Engineer, who confessed that when he heard of my arrest he had said, “Serve her right.” I asked him what his train of reasoning had been, and he replied, “None, I simply believed the newspapers.” “But now,” he said, “as soon as I saw your face I knew you were genuine.”’

Similar incidents occurred on her landing at Cape Town, where she was met by some of her devoted friends. She writes:

‘It was rather fun at the Custom House. Mrs. Murray helped me through and we both had a good laugh over the officials there. Instead of devoting themselves to the inspection of my boxes they wanted to inspect me myself, and were divided in mind between surprise that I wasn’t the sort they expected and curiosity and suspicion. One man followed me about for some time always trying to get exactly in front of my face. At last he succeeded in squaring himself just in front of me, and fixing his eyes on mine, as if he could read the inmost secrets of my soul, said imploringly, “Miss Hobhouse, tell me, the real truth – *have* you got any fire-arms?” We burst out laughing in his face and offered the keys. Another man was entering my items and when he came to my name he could not get on. He simply stood and stared till I was quite hot. At last he gasped out: “Beg pardon, but *are* you the original Miss Hobhouse? Sorry to ask, but you see I’ve read your book.” As he would not get on with his

work I was obliged to admit my identity, but rather timidly not knowing how he would take it. To my surprise he lifted his cap and served me bare-headed till I left the Customs.

'Afterwards I went to my Bank and enquired if there were any letters and papers for Miss Hobhouse. The Bank Clerk looked at me and said in a tone of ineffable disgust: "Miss Hobhouse! You don't mean to say that Miss Hobhouse is coming to South Africa again?" and he looked quite evil with concentrated Jingoism as he said it. So I made him a little bow and said: "*I am* Miss Hobhouse." Complete collapse of the clerk! You see I happened to have on a tidy dress, and was looking quite neat and not a bit like the type he expected. Next time I went it was not necessary to give my name he served me promptly and with marked docility.'

She was unwell on her arrival and accepted the kindly proffered hospitality of friends near Cape Town, but from the very first she was constantly the recipient of visits from all sorts of people, known and unknown, who wanted to pour into her sympathetic ears the story of their multifarious sufferings — often the continuation of a story already known to her.

'I had also a long visit from Miss Haupt, formerly the schoolmistress at Philippolis, where she supported her mother of 85, her sister and a niece. *All* were deported to Springfontein Camp where the old lady was very ill. Miss Haupt now earns a living by working as Secretary for Mr. Schultz. Recently she put in her claim for compensation, all her goods being destroyed as well as her position lost. The reply was she must make her claim in person at Philippolis. She begged

that it might be accepted through an agent with power of attorney, for she could not afford either the time or the money to go. She was, however, ordered to do so, and had a week's journey and £10 cost to get there. Since then her claim has been sent round from one Board to another, but so far she can get no money. I recommend her to nag away and not give up. She reports that various other people known to her, were also summoned to make claim in person, having come costly journeys, but on arrival found the Claims office had left and their journeys in vain.'

After this period of rest, Emily Hobhouse started north, staying first with Olive Schreiner at Beaufort West – the first meeting with her, and one which gave the former very great pleasure, and was the beginning of a friendship lasting till Olive Schreiner's death in 1920. Next came a visit to Bloemfontein, and a very warm welcome from her friends, the Fichardts, who had been so good to her on her previous visit. Everywhere, the feeling of dissatisfaction at the lack of fulfilment of Government promises was to the fore, and Emily gave much attention and effort, as extracts from her letters will show, to bringing before the proper authorities the poverty and destitution caused by the failure. Alike, the three million pounds promised in the Peace Treaty, the payment of military receipts and the proposed Government loan on easy terms, all seemed conspicuous by their absence.

'If the people,' she writes, 'could have but the half or the quarter of their claims paid they might at least live, and if, as the old Boer said, the Government wants to make the people satisfied, that is the only way. A starving population cannot feel pleased. My

mind is set upon a speedy trip into the country districts, but ways and means are hard to find. Horses and mules and carts are all scarce and costly. Yet a farmer by name Enslin, lately from Ceylon prison, is likely to take me. He is of course ruined, and, unable to do anything on his farm, he thought of trying to earn a living by trading. So he filled a cart with food and drove into the country districts to sell to the people who could not come to town. He has returned with his goods unsold, because though the people are well-nigh starving, subsisting in parts upon berries, etc., they had no money to buy of him. Miserable at the poverty he witnessed and his own failure, he told Arthur Fichardt he had best go to Parÿs and try to start market gardening. Mr. Fichardt at once suggested that he should first drive me on the same round as he went, for he knows the man well and has perfect trust in him as an escort. For sympathy's sake, and because it is me, he agrees (after consultation with his wife, for no Boer acts without consent of Mrs. Boer) to postpone his departure to Parÿs and to take me round. He provides wagonette, namely a vehicle large enough to take food to the people as well as our own supplies and bed, four mules, a Kaffir, forage, and his own time and services thrown in.'

The journey, as appears from the following extracts, was anything but luxurious.

'STRIJKER'S FARM,

June 13th

'We got here at 5 p.m. to-day. I got up early as agreed, for we were to start at 8 a.m., but alas! in the night

the mules had stampeded and there was nothing to be seen of them. It took Mr. Enslin and the Kaffir hours to find them, so I occupied the time by sketching another ruined farm across the river. At 11 o'clock we got off, and now after two days of driving, I feel myself dried up by sun and air just like a piece of biltong.

'We rested at noon at the Steenekamp's farm, where was the same story of no Government help – claims sent in but not a penny received. The people living in patched-up rooms at the back of the house, no oxen to plough with and another season lost. If they could but get £100 apiece *now*, it would be better than the full claims a year hence. But will they ever get anything? I begin to doubt it, and so does Mr. Strijker, Field Cornet, of this farm, and so does every one.

'It is very difficult to write with a row of Boer children watching me.

'For lunch we outspanned at the Oswegan's farm, and there found great poverty. They had not even coffee, and it is dreadful to a Boer to have no coffee to offer to a guest. I gave them some I am taking round with me and some rice. Ten days' rations (with an account) when they left the Camp, but not another penny of help from Government have they had. No cows. Some hens which cannot lay for want of food. They live on goats' milk, hares and birds which they trap, and springbok.

'The springbok are coming back again after the war, and I saw crowds to-day racing across the veld. It is nice to see the veld being re-peopled with something living.'

At another farm Emily Hobhouse notes that there was a woman who was out on the veld all the war,

‘and in consequence there is a group of pretty healthy children, the youngest aged three, having been born in the war out on the hills.’

‘Another man, Mr. Schrinder of Kaalplatz, whom I saw later in the day, also under our protection, deported, sent to prison, brought back, sent to a camp, his wife also in a camp, his house burnt, etc., claimed for £1,450 and received £48. How they laugh! Neither is the compensation equally doled out; for another claiming £96, and another claiming £50, got £14. All these things are noted in their book. The “wilde” Boer in his own heart feels the three million pounds of the Vereeniging terms will never come his way. Can’t anything be done in Parliament to ensure a juster and quicker distribution of the promised help? Cannot at any rate pressure be put to get the payment of the military receipts for which Chamberlain has given his word? Money *now* is so needed. Already a second seed-time has passed and sowing cannot be done. Yet help should come to enable the sowing of mealies and potatoes in the autumn months (the spring here).’

‘We all agreed that mules are impossibly slow and tedious and will be a great waste of time, so I have dismissed my nice escort and his team, Ceylon, Bermuda, and the others (called after prisons), and from here to Hoopstad I am to be handed on from farm to farm with relays of horses prepared in advance for me, Boer fashion. My arrival at Hoopstad has been wired and I shall find a welcome awaiting me.’

‘Mr. Bosman had that morning received the official refusal of his military receipts, which he presented me with and which I enclose. There are hundreds and hundreds of them all over the country sent in since Chamberlain’s speech. Every day I meet fresh cases. The farmers feel they have been fooled at every turn, and the dissatisfaction grows deeper daily. They have been asked to send in the receipts they had from the military, and at first they never doubted they would receive full payment. Soon it was found payment was not forthcoming. Then came Chamberlain’s speech, saying military receipts should be paid, and with renewed ardour they were sent in. But to no purpose. *I* have not yet *met* a single instance in which a man has received payment of his receipts from our military, but I have *heard* of a few cases in which a small proportion of the money due has been paid, namely a widow who had £30 for two horses, and the case of a farmer Smidt. General H. gave Mrs. Smidt a receipt for her whole flocks and herds, a large number, and insisted on sending them to a military grazing camp, where he assured her they would be under British protection. After peace Smidt was told he should be paid in Bloemfontein. Arrived there, he was sent to Hoopstad. Hoopstad said it had no money; and at last, after endless waiting, he is told only eight oxen remain, and is sent a cheque for £12 8s. for the eight – oxen being worth in this part £25 apiece *at least*.

‘HOOPSTAD

‘I reached here last night. Leaving Boshof as the sun rose I crossed the Vet river drift into Hoopstad just

as the sun sank, about seventy miles' drive. I came fast, over no sort of roads with relays arranged in advance, and only five minutes' pause to change the car and horses here and there. It seems a case of drive, drive, for ever drive here, and I hope I shall hold out, but the jolting tires one so that at last you fall asleep over the endless tales that every one wants to tell. I think I shall have to be very strict and put a limit, say twenty stories a day: and then there is the strain of hearing lots of them in Dutch.'

'It will be rather amusing, but horses are so scarce that I have to pursue my journey to-morrow in company with a Jingo Africander member of the Repatriation Board. I stop at Bultfontein, five hours from here. I hope I shan't see so many bones. I'm weary of bones. The country is a sort of Ezekiel's valley. Thousands of sheep on one side and hundreds on the other — skulls and bones as white as snow, and horses, horses, all along the way. They remind me of Tom Pearce's old mare "ghashly white" in our West-country ballad, "Old Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all."'

The Minister here

'took me to see some of his poor. When I say *here* I mean Bultfontein, a place which has nothing but sun-rises and sunsets to make one desire it. These are very beautiful. I was housed most sweetly by the store-keeper of English blood — a quiet, neutral man, who was repaid by the entire destruction of his furniture and stores — and yet is still quiet, though with his eyes wide open in surprise at his country's deeds.

'They celebrated my coming by a kind of choir practice in the room adjoining mine, where a large circle of men and women sang hymns. I was faint with hunger and fatigue. It was *very* difficult to get horses to leave Bultfontein, and when at last promised, one fell sick, so then two mules replaced one pair. That arranged, harness could not be found, but the minister, who seems everywhere both a pope and a factotum, scoured the village and at last harness was promised by an "English Africander." Later this person discovered that the harness was for *my* use, and then he refused to loan it, as I had "done good to the Boers." So it was late before some less political harness was found, and we started. On our way we saw some sad cases. One was Jan de Wet, who with his family was housed in a stable that had no window and he lay ill with rheumatic fever. The trifle he had been able to earn as *bijwoner* was thus stopped. The stable where neither air nor sun could enter struck so dank and cold that I *could* not stay in it, and he lay there with that pain. I begged them to take him out and lay him in the sunshine, which is so reviving.

'Two children had died in the Camp and the eldest daughter lost her health there completely, and now they are starving in their stable which was beautifully clean and neat and well arranged. Fortunately I had some food, which to him would rank as delicious, in my basket, and that I left with him, and I left some money with the minister to feed him while ill, etc. The Committee will understand that I never give the *money* but always leave it with the minister with written agreement how and for whom it is to be spent. The

outlook in this man's case was particularly sad – and yet there are so many like it.'

Lately

'I have been sent about by arrangement between the clergy and the farmers, consequently free, *for they would never take payment*. If this continues, I shall get on all right, but though it is the custom I do not quite like it. The farmers always do what the Dutch Reformed Ministers tell them; but at this juncture it is a great tax on them, the horses are scarce and poor, and forage a fabulous price. I insisted on paying the forage of this last drive, but *no more would they take*. If this habit continues in other places I shall get through very cheaply, but I do not want to count upon it. The de Bruyns took me out to-day calling. I was much interested in the van Graans, two brothers on different farms. They are first-class superior farmers, who had been wealthy and their wives the best sort of Boer women. One of them was clad in a complete corduroy suit from England, of which he is very proud, and Mrs. de Bruyn had given them curtains to divide their stable into rooms. On his great farm he has now only sixteen sheep and these he bought cheap from a friend because they had scab, which, by careful doctoring, he has cured. There are seven little mouths to be fed. He got seed potatoes from Repatriation for a promissory note, but the drought killed them. His brother lent him oxen to plough with, so he put in a little seed, but till it is ripe he has *nothing* to live upon. His beautiful house is in ruins, his blue gums all but two cut down, his fruit trees chopped. But how he laughed,

and how his brother laughed! There is getting something quite terrible to me in this laugh of the Boers which meets me everywhere. It is not all humour, nor all bitter, though partly both; it is more like the laughter of despair. We sit in a row by these stable walls and discuss every project possible and impossible, and then we laugh. Now and again the tears come into the men's eyes, but never into the women's, except when they speak of children lost in the camps.'

After returning to Bloemfontein, Miss Hobhouse visited Tweespruit Camp to see Miss Monkhouse, a lady formerly sent out by Miss Hobhouse's Committee, but now in Government service. Incidentally, this visit called down upon her head a severe reprimand from the acting Lieut.-Governor of Bloemfontein because his leave for it had not been asked. So war conditions and impediments were slow to die there, as always.

The next incident was the far pleasanter one of a visit to de Wet, which Emily Hobhouse details in a letter to her aunt, Lady Hobhouse.

'DE WET'S FARM,

July 1st, 1903

'I am actually staying with de Wet, having arrived at the uncompromising hour of 2.45 a.m. Only one train in the day stops at Kopje's station, and that, when it is not late, at 1 a.m. But it usually *is* late. It was a fine night but the new moon had turned upon its back and sunk into the veld before we left Kronstad, so there were only the stars to tell me when I had got to the siding and to light us on our drive across the country. Two young de Wets came to meet me and I felt quite

certain they would be able to see in the dark, which indeed they could. We slunk into the house as quietly as we could and very glad of a warm bed after the cold drive. I am shocked to see how thin General de Wet has become, only a shadow of what he was in London. This is partly owing to hard work, he says, but also to a bad finger, which for seven months has caused him acute pain. Now it is better, and he is riding about his farm on the white horse which carried him all through the war. This white horse was captured once, having a lame leg at the time, but it wisely ran away and came back to its master. When the war ended this horse and his rifle were all the movable possessions he had in the world. He found his wife in Vredefort Camp, three hours distant (18 miles) and brought them here and he told me that then he himself climbed the little koppie above the homestead and sat down to look for the first time at the heap of ruins spread beneath. Houses, outhouses, kraals, wiped out – fruit trees cut down, not any tree left – a desert all round – of all the money he had spent upon the place only the great dam remained.

‘Like all the other burghers de Wet is laughing. If he did not, he says, he should die. It makes him great fun. I do regret not being quick enough to catch all the Dutch proverbs which spice his conversation, nor the humour which runs through all the family talk – they speak so quickly. . . . [de Wet] is quite delightful in his own house, though here as elsewhere seldom to be found. In the evening one can catch him at last for a talk, but not for long, as at 8.30 p.m. we all go to bed. I think he is having a very hard pull this year,

the only help he has had was the comparatively small sum he got for his book and a royalty of 6*d.* on each volume which has not yet been paid him. It was all he had to begin life upon again.'

'I am just finishing this before my midnight start to catch the 1 a.m. train. I shall reach Heidelberg to-morrow, having promised de Wet to attend Botha's great Volks Vergadering. At first I refused, but I was strongly urged to go as men from all over will be there and they want to see me and I them, and so hear of each different district.'

'It was a wonderfully interesting day at Heidelberg where Botha held his first great meeting. At first I decided not to go, but both de Wet and Botha urged it strongly, for the burghers were looking forward to see me and for many it would be the only chance. I felt too that I should get much information and learn how best to get about the country. So I went.

'It was cold leaving de Wet's farm at midnight, and I had a long wait for the train under the stars. It came at 1.30 a.m. and for Heidelberg I had to get out at Germiston at 6 o'clock. Here I found no waiting room or anything hot to be got, so I took the first train on to Heidelberg. At every station we took up Boers, and on all sides across the veld I could see them collecting, specks of dust trending towards Heidelberg. I sometimes amuse myself by talking to Boers who do not know who I am, but simply recognize that I am English. In this way I learn their attitude towards the average English person – studied civility, combined with icy indifference – showing they have not the slightest desire

to continue the conversation: there is a gulf between. Then, if I reveal my identity, they change all over, and beam with kindness and overflow with confidences and become delightful.'

'Heidelberg is a really pretty little town nestling among hills, and with a good share of trees. The Boers were swarming into the station to meet Botha, expecting him by the train next after mine, but he had been too 'cute to trust himself to the trains of the day, and had arrived the preceding night.'

'Mounted on a very fine horse he joined the Boers at the station and headed this strange procession to the Market Square. Six or eight Generals rode beside him and his staff, and as many as had horses followed riding, others crowded into carts, spiders and buggies of every description, many walking and a few cycling. The Boers are undemonstrative and there was perfect silence as they plodded on through the red dust, but you felt they were one and all in desperate earnest and their welcome to Botha the more real because of its voicelessness. Poor, hungry-looking, shabby – they had come from far and near, many tramping from thirty to fifty miles to be present, others again clubbing together to get a cart, or one lending harness, another an animal, and so helping each other. I had never seen a mass of Boer *men* before and certainly was deeply struck by this strange procession of impoverished men – their seriousness, their silence, their orderliness, their perfect good-humour, and their deep sense of the importance of the occasion. Some of the ladies of the town accompanied this procession in carriages, and I

was with Mrs. General Viljoen and Mrs. Broers (daughter of our old friend Professor de Vos).

'So with a thick veil of red dust over us all we reached the Market Square, at the higher end of which stands the really pretty stone church with a long broad flight of steps leading up to it. At the top of these steps Botha stood, the address of welcome was read, and he replied, speaking in Dutch, loud and clear, to the patched and shabby crowd surging round. On the outskirts stood little groups of the Constabulary, looking wonderingly on at the people who took not the slightest notice of them. Three hundred extra soldiers had been sent to Heidelberg for the occasion: too funny when you think what a quiet set of men was gathered together, no pushing even as in a London crowd.

'As the hall engaged for the meeting was quite too small we went to a garden, the whole crowd walking to it without scrimmage or fuss. There, under the trees, tables were set for platforms, and the burghers who could not get near enough climbed into the trees and hung upon the branches like swarms of bees. Botha spoke on various points:

- 1st. The amnesty promised by Kitchener not yet fully accomplished.
- 2nd. The Education and Language question.
- 3rd. The money supposed by Chamberlain to be in Europe.
- 4th. The thirty-five millions saddled on the Transvaal.
- 5th. The Labour question.

'Resolutions were passed, and for three hours I listened

to Dutch speeches on these topics. Once or twice there was a laugh, but on the whole the affair was intensely quiet and almost solemn, like a church service.

'When it was over Botha told the throng that they were all invited to a garden party where he was going to introduce them to me. And then they cheered almost like Englishmen.

'So we walked away like a huge family party to another garden where in less time than it takes to write it the Boers, though there was *no* grass in the place, sat down in number about two thousand. Sandwiches were handed to them and coffee. It was great fun, but I had to sit at a table with the Generals. I had been very unwell and giddy all day – I think it was partly the altitude – and by this time I was feeling very ill indeed.

'Then they said the orphans had arrived and the garden party was going to begin. Out of the medley a square suddenly formed, on one side of which the orphans were drawn up in a phalanx, eight in a row. Opposite to these sat the eight Generals with me at the top. On another side stood the Rev. Louw, the minister, with his workers, and in the middle was a little tree wreathed about with pink tissue paper. Ill and dizzy I wondered what was going to happen next, when eight small orphans stepped shyly across the Square and pinned eight minute bouquets on the eight Generals' breasts. They were tiny children, and it was a pretty ceremony. Botha rose and spoke to the children and told them about their fathers who had fallen. I thought it must be all over when two more orphans, the minutest of all, walked up to me and gave me a basket of flowers. Botha then introduced me to the people.'

'How well I remember the scene and how those two thousand men cheered as I stood up beside Botha and clung to the little tree for support. Everything was swaying round me. Then Mr. Louw said he was going to address me and some one would interpret his remarks. Wishing to shorten the ceremony lest I should faint, I said quietly to Mr. Louw, "Ek kan verstaan, danke," not thinking anyone would hear. But the crowd caught the words and screamed and cheered with delight.'

'When we reached Pretoria I found to my surprise not only the van Veldens but a whole host of ladies to meet me — all very smart while I was in my shabbiest travelling clothes as usual and peppered red with dust.

'It was a great hand-shaking business and the orphans brought a bouquet of violets and roses. The Rev. Bosman honoured me by coming, and indeed it was the *élite* of old Pretoria that turned out to welcome me.'

After a reception at Pretoria held in a private garden because the Government refused the use of the Public Park for a ceremony in honour of Miss Hobhouse, she went to Middelburg.

'When I reached Middelburg in the afternoon another array of women was drawn up on the station to greet me and a good sprinkling of men.

'I was of course taken to the parsonage, and there, instead of being allowed to enjoy the lovely afternoon on the wide stoep, was forced into a terrible sit-kamer where all the party flocked and sat round on stiff-back chairs, and all conversation fled from you. Seeing hours of this in front of me, I proposed in desperation a visit

to the camp burying-ground, and was driven there by Mrs. Theron, who used to visit the Camp in its worst days till prohibited. The memory of that Camp will never fade from the people of this generation. The sun had dipped and the full moon rising in splendour when we reached the spot. There are three burying-grounds, but this was the largest; rows upon rows of children's graves, most bearing the date of that fatal July written on a bit of paper and put in a glass bottle. As old Mrs. van den Berg said to me to-day, the memory of those five months of 1901 and of that July in particular will haunt her to her dying day.'

'BELFAST,

July 14th

'I could write no more the other night from cold. Now I take up my parable in Belfast with what strength remains after a trying, tedious, painful, but I hope useful trek. There are two things that never fail in this land – sunshine and kindness – all else lacks (off the railway line). The question for me is how long I can exist upon these immaterial things. At night, when the sunshine we live upon has faded, and the kindness, overflowing as it is, can perforce only take the form of accommodation so dreadful one shrinks from the thought of it, then my heart sinks, and I feel I must give up and come away. With sunlight things seem more bearable again and so I go on. But now that I have reached Belfast I feel as if I could hug the railway line and will never go out of its sight again. Yet I must try to carry out my plan for Carolina and Ermelo. 'This Transvaal district is well watered, beautiful streams here and there, so the face of things is far in

advance of the Free State, but on the other hand not a sheep or goat is to be seen. It is more of an agricultural district and their first efforts must be in that direction. Consequently the people have no fresh meat, and few can afford the bully beef which is so dear and so unsatisfying.'

Arrived at Roos Senekal.

'The Boers had assembled for Nacht-maal and the scene was most picturesque. There is not a roof in Roos Senekal except that which shelters the constabulary, so tents and wagons were the order of the day, grouped round about the ruined church. As these things are now scarce, only about a fifth part of the usual congregation was assembled. The Rev. Burger of Middelburg came out to meet me, and his assistant, a young Mr. Krige.

'They had a tent ready for me, and said furniture for it would come, and sure enough it did. Bedstead, chair, washing things, candle, mirrors even, came tumbling in, all given from the things they bring for Nacht-maal, and all Boer-made but convenient. Every one crowded round, but I found I was considered the guest of the van den Bergs who fed me throughout my visit. Mrs. van den Berg is looked upon as the "great lady" of the district, and a very striking personality she is. She retains grateful recollections of Mrs. Rendel Harris's visit to Middelburg Camp, and spoke of her several times. Afterwards she was sent, this stately old dame, to Merebank Camp.

'The Parsons, myself and Mr. Haupt were entertained by her in her tent, sharing their quaint meals. All

round Kaffirs were busy cooking the evening meal, and the mules and oxen were busy munching mealies and grass.

'It was a happy family-party kind of Concentration Camp, where every one had brought what was necessary for comfort.

'It was biting cold in the tent that night, and the Kaffirs chattered so one could not sleep. I had spent the previous evening seeing "cases," and when at last the sun got up and got into my bones I went round with the clergyman to pay more visits. He was particularly anxious about a man called Schutte, whose wife and one child had died in Middelburg Camp and who was left with six children under fourteen. He himself had been badly wounded and reported dead, his wife having mourned for him four months. But he recovered, though his wounds (one in the arm) have left ill effects. He has struggled on since the peace, thirteen months ago, but heart and hope were failing at last and Mr. Burger feared he was one of the many who must sink without instant help. His house was in ruins, his flocks and herds all gone and no money. Repatriation has given him food twice since peace *with the bill*, and he dare not run up more debt, even if it were possible to get it, but since June 1 cash has been demanded and he has none. The Repatriation also advanced him twenty zinc sheets and some beams to build his house, but his arm is too bad. Now and then he can get a day's work at 5/-, equal to about 1/6 at home. Now this man is a deacon and respected in the district, but quite helpless now *unless helped*.

'His claims sent in for compensation were £400, a very

moderate sum considering all he has lost, but not a penny has yet been paid to any farmer of these claims, and when it does come it may be 6*d.* in the pound, not more.

'The Rev. Burger and I sat in solemn council over his case, and after elaborate calculations decided that hardly less than £50 would put him on his legs again. That is the amount in which the Phipps Fund was paid out, and the result is successful. Every family that received it has been set up. On the contrary the Boer Generals' Fund has been perhaps necessarily paid out in sums so small, £5 or £6, that it has no permanently useful effects. So I left this sum in Mr. Burger's hands for him, and if he gets £10 from the Compensation (6*d.* in the pound), he will be repatriated. I have dwelt at some length upon this case because it is typical.'

'Next day we passed over break-neck roads through the mountains to Dullstroom. Further on I saw some ruins (in fact I get quite annoyed now whenever I see a roof, it seems so unnatural and well-to-do).

'So with patience and pain we lumbered on. At the very top of the pass was a grave with a big white cross standing against the blue sky. Captain Angus Menzies of the 1st Bttn. Manchester Regiment, who fell near the end of the war. We got out and visited it. We generally do to all the graves, and singly or in groups we pass very many. There was something about this one, lonely and aloft, that struck me as very pathetic. 'We passed that night close by at the farm of Piet Taute, the Veld Cornet, a fine Boer specimen. He had been very rich and prosperous. His house had

been burnt down *three* times, and he had been trying, himself, to rebuild it. But cash for roof and fittings had failed, and it was, though large, in a terrible confusion, awful to sleep in, the holes in the roof blowing blasts on your head all night. His wife was stamped with the Camp look, a look quite absent from her old mother who had kept in the hills all through the war and looked hale. She was a colonial woman and could speak English, and looked on my visit as a godsend. Her confinement is imminent, and no cash. There was a large party of us at supper and so little to eat. These meals are mostly long graces. She sat reading her Bible all the afternoon, she said, for she felt heavy and miserable, and she had stumbled on the words about the righteous never being forsaken nor his seed begging their bread, and it cheered her to see me come. Evenings, like this one in the farms, the entire family and workmen sit round in solemn parliament and discuss the situations, political and material. "Die Toekomst is donker" (the future is dark) is the beginning and ending of it all. The Boers are watching narrowly, wide awake now for every sign from England of hope for themselves.

'But I am digressing from Piet Taute's home. It was a terrible night to me, but next day the sun came to cheer us. Mrs. Taute gave me some bread spread thick with lard to take with me, and I got her husband, Oom Pieter, to come outside with me and very shyly offered him some money to finish his house and help in his wife's illness. And then this huge Veld-Cornet broke down and began to cry! He was *so* glad, *so* thankful. Mind you he was a man of position and had

had large possessions, once. I was not quite sure if he would be offended but was glad I summoned courage to offer him help. For the more I see the more certain I feel that the one necessary thing is to set the big landowners going, and as life is arranged in this country all will then follow well and poverty will vanish.

'I got at last to Belfast, the highest town in the Transvaal. As we jogged along I dozed a little in the wagon, and when I opened my eyes I thought I saw our Cornish Kit Hill with the chimney on the top, but it turned out to be the monument in memory of 1881, where Dingaan's Day is kept in this district. Now the rails and pedestals are broken and destroyed, and the names of those who fell in that war defaced. It is situated seven thousand feet in altitude. Hence we dropped five hundred feet down upon Belfast and surprised that little community, upsetting its kind plan of receiving me at the station (as intended) with an address of welcome. But Mr. Cootzee, whose guest I was, called the town together next morning, and then the address was read to me, and I spoke to them, and the children of the "Privaat" school came and sang. Tea was handed round and then every one began to tell their respective stories. It was a busy two days while I waited to see if I could go on to Carolina and Ermelo, but horses were not to be found nor other beast to take me there. I was not sorry to come back to Pretoria and rest and digest my tour.

'It would be hard to sum up the total impression of ruin and devastation, of privation borne with pluck, of silent determination, which was made by the whole

tour. Even in Belfast, an occupied town, forty houses are wrecked, twelve or fourteen of which were the property of my host, once a member of the Volksraad. Had he but those houses now, the rent would be something upon which he could live, and he is, in his poverty, trying to help the more helpless. It was sad to see his beautiful farm six miles from town, every tree on which he had planted himself, and he took me there to mourn with him over the ruin and the wreck of his life's work in laying out the place.'

CHAPTER XI

MORE TREKS IN RUINED DISTRICTS

1903

AFTER such hard travelling, a rest was badly needed, and this Emily Hobhouse greatly enjoyed, thanks to the warm hospitality of General and Mrs. Smuts at their house in Pretoria. But before long, she was off again on a journey to the north of the Transvaal, staying for a time at Pietersburg, where she noted the new factor of a large and prosperous Kaffir element, side by side with the familiar story of ruin of the Boer farmers. Again, on her return to Pretoria, Miss Hobhouse gave much time and thought to the misunderstandings and difficulties with regard to the compensation and promised Government relief, corresponding at length with Mr. Patrick Duncan, then Colonial Treasurer, sending him notes of cases not receiving proper attention which had come to her knowledge personally, and making suggestions for the better administration of the available funds. Mr. Duncan's sympathetic consideration was a great encouragement to her, and the measures taken to improve matters, whilst still leaving a great chasm betwixt public promises and performance, were some alleviation of a most difficult situation. As Mr. Duncan pointed out, the difficulties of such an organization were extremely great, and some confusion in working the scheme was almost bound to occur. He tells me how helpful it was to have the results of Miss Hobhouse's investigations.

The next journey, to the north of the Orange Free State, was perhaps the saddest of all. The utter destitution and poverty is told vividly in letters at the time.

Coming first to Heilbron, Emily Hobhouse was met with the familiar reception and solemn address in Dutch. Thence Mr. Jaspar Theron drove her by Driefontein to Lindley, or rather the ruins of it.

LINDLEY,

August 2nd, 1903

'It was late when we got to Lindley itself and the moon was all we had to guide us. The road was bad, and the drift across the river deep with very steep cliffs on either side, but we came through and at last drove into the silent broken village, white in the moonlight. A strange medley it was of ruins and tents with a few new roofs, brand new, rising here and there from the refuse of the past. No one was about, and it was some time before we could find our way or anyone to guide us. Finally I was consigned to old Mr. Kok, and Mr. Theron got a bed on the floor of an office, our Kaffir boy in the stable. The whole of Lindley is too sad and dejected outwardly and inwardly to write about. . . . 'The Koks are so poor I hardly dared to eat their food; their bed was corrugated iron, the floor would have been pliable by comparison. The ruins of their nice house stand before the door, never alas to be rebuilt, for they are old and can never earn the money again. He is 74, but the plucky old man saved the Church registers and stuck to them through thick and thin. He is an educated man. From affluence they are brought in old age to dire poverty. But there was no

word of complaint; he spent his time telling me of all the poor around while he said no word of his own condition. I had to learn that from others. It is all lamentable in the town and district. I shall never forget the pathos of the meeting when they came to address me. I felt so utterly at a loss what to say to them. Even General Olivier could not speak, but turned away, and they silently melted off, each with his burden of want and debt and barrenness, in face of which one's sympathy seemed a mockery. It is the hardest sort of speech to make, talking to people who are well nigh starving, whose homes are in ruins, who have no money and no prospects. They have struggled bravely for over a year, but now all is closing in dark around them. I fear hope is waning at last, and I dread lest their self-respect should be lost. Here and there one hears of a man going out of his mind, and why more are not so affected is a mystery to me. . . .

'I left a bag of meal for about thirty starving families in Lindley; that means £60.

'Our trek from Lindley was a sad one; we drove away from the ruins early, trying to shake off the depression which hung upon the place. About fifteen miles out from town we met a man with a bundle under his arm walking towards Lindley. He had on the green trousers of the Ceylon prisoners of war, and there was purpose on his face. Shortly we came upon his little daughter, a child of twelve. She was neatly dressed in a blue print frock and kapje, and she was riding a creature which must by courtesy be called a horse. At least it had four legs and a tail and a sort of bone which supported the saddle. She was leading another such

animal which had helped to carry her father to town. We called to her to ask the way, and she rode close up to our cart.

'She had the motionless face of the veld girl with the deep still eyes, and she sat her horse with grace and self-possession. We had some talk with her.

' "How goes it with you?" we said.

' "It goes well," she replied.

' "Have you then food?"

' "No, we have no food."

' "You mean that you have no meat?"

' "No, we have no meat."

' "But you have vegetables or potatoes?"

' "No, we have no vegetables."

' "But at least you have bread?"

' "No, we have no bread."

' "What! No bread nor meal?"

' "No, we have no bread nor meal."

' "Then what do you eat?"

' "Just mealies."

' "And have you many of those?"

' Some moisture gathered in the child's eyes as she answered, "Very few left."

' "But your father is gone to town, will he not work and bring you home some food?"

' "Yes, my father has found some house building work to do in town, but he cannot bring us home food; he owed money to the store before the war and he must work to pay that off."

' "But these horses are your own?"

' "No, we had them from the Government and in two years we must pay for them."

“And how are you off for clothes?”

“It goes scarce with clothes.”

“We gave the child half a loaf we had with us, and as she took it her lips trembled and a flicker like the shadow of a smile passed over her face as she said, “My mother will be very glad.”

“Then silently she turned and hugging the loaf trotted away over the veld, a solitary blue speck in the vast brown expanse. Some miles further we came to a place called Plezier, a greater misnomer could not be imagined. A piece of house had been patched up, but there was no smoke or other sign of life. Not a tree or bush or plant or green blade of any sort could be seen near or far. We knocked, seeking permission to outspan. A deadness hung over the place; I felt anxious, I wondered what we should find. Remember, the Boer custom when a cart drives up to the door is for the master or mistress to come out, introduce themselves, and with all heartiness invite you in and make you welcome. After several knocks the door was opened, leave was given us to outspan, but still we were not invited in. I got out of the cart and went to the door. The house was poor but exquisitely neat; there were no chairs, just a table and a box or two to sit upon. Upon the clay walls were fastened the few relics of better days. A good-looking woman and a number of girls, neatly but poorly dressed, were grouped round the room and an equal number of tidy boys in the kitchen at the back. There were eleven children. They sat very silent looking at me, and I introduced myself as coming from well-known men in their town. Mr. Theron wanted to take our luncheon in the house,

but some instinct told me there was great trouble there and I could not eat with all those eyes upon me. So I only asked permission to boil my kettle on their table out of the wind, and then when we had lunched I said I would come and hear their story. I hated myself afterwards to think I had made my tea at their table. When I made them understand who I was, the women told me all – the same sad tale, of course, as everywhere, but they had nothing left, nothing to eat but mealies, and so few of them that they must eke them out by one meal a day only. There was nowhere to turn for money or for help; the husband had tramped away some thirty miles to seek work on a railway; at best he would get 4*s.* 6*d.* a day, and on that no family here can live; it would not much more than feed *him*. But it might be weeks before she would hear from him; they had been comfortably off, tenant farmers paying £50 a year rent. They had come to the bare land and every improvement on it had been done by themselves, the houses built and all, and all had been swept and done away, no single sheep remained of all their possessions, and now a letter had come from the owner's agent in Bloemfontein raising the rent from £50 to £70 a year. She and her children sat there face to face with starvation, that terrible kind which is combined with perfect respectability. (I had been told about them in Lindley.) Even if there were neighbours the girls could get no work, for no one can afford to put out washing, ironing or needlework.

'One of the girls took me into the bedroom and in a whisper told me they had nothing to eat. The woman kept her secret longer. It is so awful to people of this

good class to say they are in want, or even seem to beg. They pointed to a house about half a mile off, and said it was just the same there. There was a big lad, and hearing there was a wayside store not far off, I took him there and bought food enough to last them about a week till the bag of meal which I had ordered for them in Lindley should arrive. That may last three weeks, and then they are in the same position again. Government must feed the people. At the store stood a lamentable vehicle, drawn by animals which might be either horses, mules, donkeys or ponies. I can't say which. The lad asked the driver if he could take for him the half bag of meal I had given him and leave it at the farm. The man said he was sorry, the animals were borrowed and so was the cart and harness and they were so weak they could hardly crawl along, and he dared not add to the weight. This man was a very fine young Boer with well cut features. His young wife was with him. Mr. Theron introduced me to them; they belong to a good family, as indeed was apparent by their dress and bearing. The woman put her arm through mine and whispered she wanted to speak to me. She drew me out of earshot of the men on the stoep. Then her courage failed her and she could not speak. Her face was very white with blue shadows round the lips and eyes. I said, "Are you hungry?" I am getting experienced now and begin to understand. She said for months she had eaten *nothing* but mealies, not meal, nor meat, nor coffee, nor *anything* else. They had borrowed the cart and come to the store to fetch the last half bag they could buy. She put her hand on my arm again and said, "I have noth-

ing, we have nothing, don't you understand?" And then at last I did understand, her baby was coming, the first baby, and she had not even a shawl to wrap it in. I understood her Dutch perfectly, but she was too shy to speak openly. She said she had a frightful craving for a bit of fresh meat, but none was to be got in the shop. A baby's shawl and a bit of flannelette made heaven open for her again, and I gave her a tin of Australian mutton and a few groceries. She had a good face. Six of her brothers and sisters had died in Kroonstad Camp.

'But I shall weary you – all along the route wherever we stopped the condition of the people was the same – mealies only – and those at the last ebb – a famine of money everywhere.

'We had a hearty welcome in the ruined parsonage of Reitz where the Viljoens are struggling with the sorrows of their people.

'At night they met me in the school; it was packed. An address of welcome was read and I had to speak to them. The silence was profound, many women wept quietly. They sang a hymn and the Dominie prayed and by the dim light of three or four guttering candles I could see the hopeless look on the seamed, wrinkled faces of the men.

'They all filed out shaking hands with me at the door, young and old – it was very impressive.

'We can only give them hope by ploughing for them. The Government must feed them now. I sent thirty bags of meal there, the transport is heavy, it cost £55. Had I bought it on the spot the same quantity would have been nearly £65, but it was sold to me at cost

price. But this only helps thirty families for a few weeks, and then? Who will give the next?’

On returning to Heilbron, Emily Hobhouse considered what steps she could take to bring relief to this tragic country, and decided to cable to England, urging Lord Courtney to bring the matter before the Home Government and at the same time writing an appeal herself for voluntary help from the Cape, which was given publicity in the *South African News* of 13th August. Further, both before and after another journey to the Klerksdorp district of West Transvaal, where sadly similar conditions obtained, Miss Hobhouse placed the matter before the public in Johannesburg and funds began to come in to her from both appeals and formed the nucleus for fresh relief, which she distributed chiefly in the form of provision of meal and of teams to enable farmers to plough. On 27th September she was able to write that:

‘My cable home has succeeded and the Government there has wired all I said to the Government here.’

Yet another trek took Emily Hobhouse into the Lichtenburg district of South-West Transvaal, visiting General and Mrs. de la Rey, finding at Biesjesvlei three pigs and two houses spared by the kindness of Lord Methuen – acts remembered and quoted with much gratitude. Then a last journey to Jacobsdal in Western Orange Free State.

After five months of this very hard travel and the strain of being constantly in the midst of suffering, it was a great relief to reach Paarl in Cape Colony in November 1903, and to spend nearly two months visiting her many friends in the neighbourhood, including Mr. and Mrs. Sauer and

Chief Justice and Lady de Villiers. There was a great deal to be done by correspondence in regard to the organization of the relief for which her Cape appeal had brought £7,000 and the *Manchester Guardian* wired her £1,000 in addition to the sums raised by the Distress Fund, whose agent she originally was. Part of this money was expended as already mentioned, on teams of oxen, and a letter of 23rd November relates the purchase of some as follows:

'We drove to a farm sale last week as I wanted some oxen for the north. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful drive. We took our lunch and bought some strawberries on the way. It was curiously unlike our sales, for the auctioneer did not stand on a table or cry up the articles sold, and the Dutch farmers stood about in groups as if they had no interest in the sale. The auctioneer moved from group to group and the slow and cautious farmer usually told him in a whisper what he could give; then the auctioneer shouted it out, and then again would be privately pushed a little higher. Old Mr. de Waal said he would bid for me, so I sat and looked on. Of course there were no other women there, so they soon found out who I was, and the oxen which had advanced upon £15 dropped again to that figure when they knew I was bidding and for what purpose. Then as the price was being entered in the auctioneer's book, a farmer went up and said I was not to be charged the entire sum, he wished to pay 10s. upon each ox. Then another farmer came and said he would see to the oxen and send them home for me, and so I got a lovely team cheap. The farmers congratulated me on my oxen — they said they were in first-class condition

and "geleerde goed" (learned goods), what we should call *trained*. Then I bought six more off Mr. Sauer cheap, and sent them all up north in two trucks. Mr. Sauer gave me the forage for their journey, and his own man to go with them to feed and water till their journey's end. This means a week's work and wages. The generosity of the Dutch is extraordinary, and it's all over the same. Now the trucks cost £10 10s. apiece, but with this expense thrown in we still save some £50 on the team.'

The refreshment of her friend's homes, the beautiful flowers and fruit abounding everywhere were a great solace to jaded nerves, but anxiety about Lord and Lady Hobhouse made her feel the need to tear herself away, and she sailed once more for England on 22nd December 1903.

CHAPTER XII

RETURN TO ENGLAND

1904

AFTER these months of arduous work in South Africa, Emily Hobhouse hoped to gain some refreshment from the voyage. Instead of which she suffered acutely in her head, and met with trying adventures in consequence, which she describes in her autobiography.

‘It probably arose from my own over-exhausted condition, coupled with the cork-like motion of a vessel returning empty. So great did the agony become that it was suggested to me that it would be wise to get off at Lisbon and complete my journey overland. But I had not provided myself with sufficient cash for a long land journey. Experienced men assured me, however, that this lack need not deter me as the British Consul at Lisbon would undoubtedly cash my cheque – indeed they believed it a Consul’s duty to render such help to his fellow-citizens. Tortured in my head and foolish enough to believe, I decided to leave the ship. . . .

‘But other difficulties awaited me.

‘We anchored in the Tagus and those who wished to land underwent examination if coming from ports where there had been plague. It was indeed long since plague had been heard of at Cape Town, but the Portuguese are particular. Only one passenger landed be-

sides myself – a gentleman from the Cape Colony but coming, I believe, from a plague-free port. The Regulations demanded the fumigation of soiled linen. Instead of at once throwing such articles into the sea, I admitted with characteristic exactitude their existence, little recking the consequences. I was put into a boat and carried off to the Lazaretto on the further bank of the Tagus, the unfortunate gentleman having to share this fate. Neither of us spoke Portuguese and my mixture of French and Spanish did not help much. Landed at last in a large park-like garden we found huge furnaces and fumigating erections. The mouth of the Tagus is wide and Lisbon looked very small in the far distance. Our hope of speedy release was small when we found not a single furnace was heated and the attendants strolling about showed no signs of hurry. We walked over the grounds but returned to find the furnaces still cold. I urged speed and very reluctantly a fire was kindled. After a further wait I was told it would take at least two hours to get the furnace to the requisite heat and then at least another two hours for effective fumigation! The short January day was closing in and Lisbon far across the water. My companion was patience personified, but both he and I began to feel perturbed. Only then did it flash upon me that the men were playing for a bribe and that the worthless things would more easily be destroyed. I produced money and begged them to burn the parcel. The effect was magical. At the first gleam of silver they opened the fumigator and produced the parcel, crying, "Let her have it." Hastily we ran down to the shore, lucky to find the boat still waiting, but the sun had dipped

and the stars were coming out as we crossed that wide expanse of water. The boatman did not fail to exact a heavy toll: absolutely at his mercy we thankfully paid it to get ashore. I think it is the only occasion on which I have ever resorted to a bribe to civil officials in discharge of their duty. . . .

'I hurried next morning to the British Consulate, only to meet with a blank and a very curt negative from the Consul himself. In vain I gave name, references, etc. He said he had never heard my name or that of Barclay's Bank. In a word no help was forthcoming. It was only with great reluctance that I could induce him to recommend me a reliable Bank in the town. Thither I went finding an equally blank wall. I began to see a Portuguese gaol in front of me should the hotel hurry to present its bill. I wired to Barclay's asking them to cable money to the Lisbon Bank. Imagine my horror when I called at the Bank again to enquire if it had come and encountered only a chill disdain. I saw then all it meant to be in a foreign country without money. I had cabled instead of writing in order to save time, and had only lost it. Now I wrote urgently to my Bank – and though I hated troubling him – wrote to my Uncle also of the straits I was in. The posts were slow, but my Uncle at once realized my position and acted. He went to my Bank to find that though they had received my telegram they had not recognized it. The money was cabled immediately and when I called at the Lisbon Bank to draw it I was received with smiles and bows. From this incident I learnt never to call on a British Consul and that Banks do not recognize telegraphic signatures.

'In a couple of days I was in London amusing my Aunt with these experiences.

'The week in Lisbon had done much to restore my shattered health, but months passed before I regained any measure of my former strength. Much work lay before me. Accounts of my funds to be rendered, meetings to speak at, and above all typical cases to be laid before the Home Government. Looking back over that year 1903, I find a letter from my Aunt to a friend of hers in which she rather succinctly summed up my South African work in these words:

' "The course of affairs seems to me closely to resemble that of the Concentration Camps, i.e. first, Denial; second, Publicity; third, Amendment."

'I was delighted at an opportunity just then given me by Mr. Morley to spend an hour with him, and in explaining how conditions had developed in the new Colonies I dwelt very specially upon the unbending Boer opposition to Chinese Labour. How easy it was to pour out to that receptive mind in the quiet of his book-lined room at Flowermead!

Another interview was one with the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton. For this purpose, Miss Hobhouse was asked to prepare a *précis* of the subjects she wished to bring forward, and as her summary of this gives her views upon many important matters then occupying her mind and the efforts she had made both in Africa and England to remedy them, it deserves notice here. The *précis* embodied:

'... the case of the widows in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony from the date of Mr. Chamberlain's public promise in November, 1902, which made

the Government responsible for widows, orphans and the destitute. The Boer Generals, then in Europe for the purpose, were induced *by that promise* and indeed forced to desist from collecting funds. It also had the effect of stopping our English fund.

'Full seven months after this promise and more than twelve months after Peace I found widows, even those formerly affluent, in most destitute circumstances.

'I found that widows had received no more governmental help than other people, viz. barest rations (with bill attached) and that these rations had been stopped on May 31st after a harvest which had failed and at the beginning of the South African winter.'

'*Secondly, About Military Receipts.* I wrote of the great dissatisfaction owing to their non-payment. That after Mr. Chamberlain's tour a *few more* had been paid, quite unevenly; one man would be paid, another not; that the reasons alleged for non-payment were often quite unfounded, and even if correct such receipt was considered a business contract which could not be violated by subsequent action.

'That after Mr. Chamberlain's speech proclaiming that "a British officer's receipt was as good as a bank note," hope revived, that his word was trusted and many used them as security in shops to purchase food and clothing. I produced instances. That the general condition of the country was so bad and the rations where given so insufficient and often uneatable, the need of payment of these Military Receipts was pressing.

'*Thirdly,* I wished to plead the condition of the former members of the Boer Police Force. It was generally

understood that the liabilities of the Boer Government were taken over by the Annexing Power, but the former police had been overlooked. Deprived of their profession, in many cases with a year's salary still owing, they were compelled in advanced life to begin afresh with no means. They needed either the salary owing or a small pension such as was given to ex-Landrosts and other ex-officials. That I had spoken of their condition to Mr. Duncan who said nothing had been set aside for that class of the community.

Fourthly, Some Individual Cases.

Fifthly, I brought forward with full particulars the cases of Mrs. Nienaber of Hanover, Cape Colony, mother of seven children, whose husband was executed for train-wrecking of which he was (and was proved to be) wholly innocent.

'Such were the headings of the interview. Lady Hobhouse drove me down to Westminster in her brougham, so I arrived fresh and indeed felt I needed all my wits to plead the cause of [the Boer] people. Mr. Alfred Lyttelton was well known for his singular charm and this winning manner made it easy to open my mind to him. We talked a long while and he seemed really interested. At any rate he showed no haste to dismiss me, and even after I made the move he detained me to ask my views on Chinese labour.

'The fact emerges from this summary that Mr. Lyttelton's good will was hampered by lack of means. No money was the bar. It made me think of the old Boer who said, "If you did not grudge two hundred and fifty millions to conquer us, why should you mind another two or three millions to make us comfortable?"

Well, I presume there is only one answer to that. *Fear*. Fear of the opinion of Parliament and the country. If another war credit had been asked for, it would have been easy — people don't mind what they pay for war — but for *Peace* — and comfort, for settlement and reconstruction it's hard to squeeze money from Parliaments.'

Miss Hobhouse continued correspondence on individual cases with Mr. Lyttelton throughout the year, but the results were incommensurate with the effort, as they were merely referred back to South Africa whence refusal to help had already come.

It was in this year that Lady Courtney organized a presentation to Emily Hobhouse from many friends to express their admiration for all she had so courageously done. Although she herself was inclined to agree with one of her friends who felt such expressions out of place, yet the support which it indicated was very welcome, coming as it did from her many friends, including such widely respected people as Lord and Lady Ripon, Lord Spencer, Lord Morley and Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, all now deceased, and many others.

But a new idea was crystallizing in Emily's fertile brain, and after an interval of quieter life with her uncle and aunt in Bruton Street, this necessitated a journey in Europe. The idea was that of organizing home industries for the Boer girls on the farms in order to occupy their minds and further to add to their means. She writes:

'I had seen so many sitting in their ruined homes where every means of occupation had been destroyed. I knew they had skill with the needle and I had detected here and there a latent sense of art. They appeared to cling

to home and family life and time was theirs in abundance. This tranquil existence, combined with brilliant skies, all helped to suggest lace-making and particularly needle-point as a most suitable occupation. Obviously the first step was to inform myself and I set to work to study the various methods and systems throughout England, Ireland and the Continent. I became a plague to every lady I knew who possessed old lace, and many exquisite collections were shown me. I studied exhibits in the Museums and haunted antique lace shops. I procured introductions to the principal lace-shops, asking advice upon my scheme. To recount all that was said by the "Trade" would be too technical for these pages. 'When I had learnt all I could in London, my mind turned to Venice as the cradle of European lace, and the best starting point. An introduction to Lady Layard, whose long residence in Venice had brought her in close touch with the lace industry, opened the way. I felt able to leave my Aunt for a few weeks. She did not mind such absences so long as I kept in northern spheres, and her interest in my work was unfailing.'

On the way to Venice visits were paid to President and Mrs. Steyn at Cannes, and to President Kruger at Mentone, which last must be told in her own words:

'At that time President Kruger was at Mentone, and after a couple of sunny days with [Mrs Steyn] – which I recollect included a visit to Grasse to see the preparation of flowers and fruits – I went there for a couple of nights. Oom Paul's secretary, Mr. Bredell, called at my hotel and took me to the little villa where I had

my first and last view of that remarkable man. It impressed me deeply. As we stood in the hall, the door of the parlour was wide open, and there, clothed in sombre black was the old man, solitary and absorbed. He sat before a table on which rested a high brass reading-stand which in its turn supported a heavy folio Bible. Paul Kruger was reading and was evidently so withdrawn that he was impervious to sight or sound. I stood in the hall and gazed at this unusual sight framed like a picture by the doorway. I did not want him disturbed, but Mr. Bredell insisted on taking me into the room and arousing his President to greet me. Our talk was not long: I saw that already his mind was elsewhere and the world ended for him. Indeed in less than four months he was in his grave. He wanted so much to know if I had seen his wife, and when told I had not been allowed to visit Pretoria before her death, he seemed too disappointed to make further effort. I stole out of the room, and looking back saw he had turned again to the Bible and was once more absorbed in its pages. He belonged so clearly to another age – the little modern French villa was a cheap, incongruous setting to that medieval and puritanical figure.'

An unpleasant journey in the course of which her purse was stolen with much consequent inconvenience, brought Emily Hobhouse to Venice on Easter morning.

'We had some beautiful weeks in Venice. I worked very hard at the study of lace; that was my primary purpose there and took precedence of sight-seeing. Lady Layard's introductions opened many doors and information was readily given me at Burano and else-

where. I noted the defects in the organization there established and felt these need not be reproduced in South Africa. The whole subject in its many branches is wider than generally realized and needs long and close study. Moreover the story of lace and its various developments is bound up with the history of Western Europe of the last four centuries. I took lessons myself, conquering the principles of the work, and I was strongly recommended to go to Bologna and study the work of the Aemilia Ars, but that had to be left to a later date.'

This study was, however, continued in Belgium on the journey home, after which Miss Hobhouse again joined her uncle and aunt, this time in the country in Oxfordshire.

'The lovely summer days passed tranquilly at Crowsley Park, and by the time the bluebells had faded in the woods we were back in Bruton Street. The lease of my Chelsea flat had ended the previous year and my furniture was stored, so that Bruton Street was my sole resting place from that date. Indeed, my Aunt used to say as long as she lived it would be always home for me. And very grateful I was, and much I loved them and valued the privilege of being with them. Still – given a couple who, however old, were yet singularly self-reliant and independent, added to a houseful of competent servants – there was nothing for an active person to do, no outlet for one's energies. It was difficult to see on what ground they wanted me. *Now*, with personal experience of old age, I understand the truth of what Lady Farrer suggested, viz., that not wishing to make use of any personal services did not affect the question of how needful one's mere presence may be.

'It is a lesson to me, for people of my nature often forget that "being" is more important than "doing" – or to put it in another way – what you *are* has more influence than what you *do*. My Uncle and Aunt, though I did not know it, were both in the last year of their lives and must have been feeling all the weakness attendant upon that fact. Outwardly it was concealed with great calm and dignity. I see it far more plainly now as I read old letters. They wrote more than they spoke.

'Just then my attention was turned more definitely to spinning and weaving, and a visit to Ireland was the result. Mrs. J. R. Green asked me to lunch shortly after our return to town and we discussed the possibility of cottage industries. I found her opposed to lace, but very strongly in favour of spinning and weaving. Her opposition was based on the fact that lace was a "luxury" and that only wealthy Johannesburgers would be able to purchase it. Spinning and weaving appealed to her historically; she pointed out that the women of every nation in the Old World had spun and had woven, they had been through the educative processes entailed in producing all the textile necessities of their people still within the comparatively short period that machinery had replaced them. She felt, perhaps rather romantically, that such handicrafts would help the formation of [Boer] national life, while making use of [the] staple product – wool. It would add interest to solitary farm life, and articles made would not necessarily be sold but in the first place provide the workers' homes with blankets, rugs, tweeds, coatings and so forth. On these lines solid benefit must result. If, on the other hand, the industry took the shape of articles

made by girls at high wages, living the dearer life of towns and with various overhead expenses, I knew the products could only be costly and end by ranking as "luxuries" also. Hand-made products, made under such circumstances, cannot compete in price with machine-made goods. Useful it might be, but by no means in the degree intended. Still I yielded to Mrs. Green, as she urged a study of these industries and others in Ireland where much could be seen doing in the cottages. With this in view I went shortly after to Ireland under the wing of Mrs. Green herself who could give me the best introductions. Meanwhile my suggestions about Home Industries were laid before the Committee of the Distress Fund. They approved and were willing to send out circulars to test the feeling of their supporters. Whether or not the scheme could evolve depended upon sufficient supplies being assured for at least the first three years.'

After the Irish visit Emily Hobhouse went straight to Somerset to what proved to be the last of those many summer visits to her uncle and aunt. At the end of it, she first met Margaret Clark (now Gillett) whose willingness to go with her to South Africa as a helper in the Industries scheme did so much to make her decide to undertake it. Miss Hobhouse realized more and more as time went on how much she owed to her as an ardent worker, a good organizer and a wise counsellor.

'The time had become ripe for winding up the South African Women and Children Distress Fund, and at a meeting at Mrs. Courtney's house in November this was done and instead it was proposed to form the Boer

Home Industries and Aid Society. During these autumn weeks I had been working hard at spinning and weaving, going daily to a school, but early in November my Uncle's condition caused us alarm, and my time and strength were wholly taken up. I hardly know which needed most care; he in his weakness or my Aunt in her utter desolation. It was soon over, and on the 6th of December he left us. He was eighty-five. The Memorial Service was held in St. Margaret's, Westminster, a very noble service, but my dear Aunt was too broken: I represented her instead as chief mourner with my cousin.

'Those were sad weeks. My whole being was absorbed in helping my Aunt to bear her loss. For fifty-six years they had been man and wife, rarely apart, and with the special possession in each other of those who have no children. She had never faced the world or faced anything alone.

'I dwell much upon this loss, for I never felt any death so deeply. Since I was six years old I had been closely linked to my Uncle, and I always looked on him and my Aunt as my mental parents. It was hard to creep into her room that dark winter morn and break to her that the end was near; and together we stayed with him till all was over and I led her back to rest.'

The problem before Emily Hobhouse was a very difficult one – that ever-recurrent conflict between private and public duties, which is, perhaps, incapable of perfect solution. On the one hand was the vision of a piece of reconstructive work which would possibly influence hundreds of lives and which no one else seemed able to undertake – with funds collected,

Margaret Clark and an expert worker ready to go, with berths taken and preparations made in South Africa. On the other hand was Lady Hobhouse in her loneliness and old age, needing help and companionship as never before, and yet too reserved and independent to ask her niece to stay as the latter suggested she should do if so desired. Who can weigh imponderables like these? Emily Hobhouse decided that she had better not delay, though the decision cost her much pain.

‘It cut me deeply to leave her so forlorn. I never saw her again. We reached Philippolis in February and by the last week in April I was already writing to secure my berth when the fatal cable reached me. Her weekly letter had never failed nor mine to her. She represented herself at the best, or maybe, I should have started sooner. It was inconceivably sad that for three weeks letters continued to reach me when the hand that wrote them was already cold. In one of these she bid me never regret that I had gone: she would rather think of me doing useful public work in South Africa than sitting at her bedside, and all was as it should be. I knew she had written this with exquisite tact lest I should reproach myself. As she had battled through the winter I had felt so sure that the spring would restore her as it always had done and that we should spend the summer together. I should have been with her before May was out. Towards the end of April I had gone to Pretoria to discuss matters concerning our work with General Smuts: there the cable reached me and there the full realization of my great loss came upon me. I knew then I was absolutely alone for the remainder of my life.’

CHAPTER XIII

BOER HOME INDUSTRIES

1905

EMILY HOBHOUSE's new venture met with warm approval from her friends, and she records letters of good wishes from William Watson, from Lord Bryce and Prince Kropotkin, whilst a visit from Lord Courtney on purpose to say good-bye gave her especial pleasure. She arranged for her party to travel on the same steamer with President and Mrs. Steyn and their daughters, and the long hours were whiled away with good talk, with reading aloud and with practising the arts of carding and spinning wool in preparation for teaching in South Africa. At the beginning of March 1905, Emily and her companions arrived at Philippolis in the Orange Free State, where her friend the Rev. Colin Fraser, Mrs. Steyn's father, was the Minister, who had made possible the beginning of the spinning and weaving industry by obtaining quarters and making many necessary arrangements. The journal gives a description of the actual arrival.

'We, joined by the Frasers, left them at Springfontein, and came here to Philippolis. Moses, to be our "Boy," was at the station to meet us. I learned he had just come out of prison (for no great offence). A "spider" took Mr. and Mrs. Fraser, Margaret and myself, with much changing and chopping of steeds, and our companion and the two little Steyn girls went in the Cape

cart. We crossed the veld for nine weary and jolting miles on a lovely day with clouds flecking the sky and not too much sun. Emeline Fraser had dinner ready for us and nice cool rooms, and there for two days we rested in comfort as far as bed and board went, but working every moment between whiles to unpack and get our house ready. Such a work! Fifty cases or more to be opened and unpacked and the house to be cleaned and new untrained servants. We toiled till Saturday night more dead than alive and on Sunday were but fit to lie on the sofa. That rested us and we started with fresh strength and hope to-day (Monday). But at moments and in the heart of the novelty, and the pressure of work, everyone wanting direction at once, my heart nearly failed me and weakened my belief in my own schene; the mass of detail temporarily obliterating the ideal in my mind. Now it dawns again and if my plan of getting Constance Cloete to come and keep house for us succeeds, I think we may yet prosper. 'Nothing can exceed the goodness and hospitality of the Frasers and of other people here, or the eccentricities of black Moses.'

On 13th March is recorded the actual beginning of the school, with six girl pupils, who proved most apt and intelligent. It might have been hoped that having got so far in making a reality of an idea, the main difficulties were overcome, but unfortunately, this was hardly the case, and many and various were the obstacles to be dealt with. To begin with, the climate was more trying than was realized by the English workers, who endeavoured, unwisely, as time showed, to work as hard as in cooler lands. Then, the effect

of climate was not limited to the people, for the processes of dyeing or washing the wool produced quite different results from those anticipated, which meant that experience had to be gained anew, and in addition, much experiment with the new dyes available had to be made.

A further great difficulty inherent in the accommodation at Philippolis was the lack of room to expand, or of sufficient water supply. Geographically, too, the position was not central enough. Just at the time of considering the necessary plans for the future came the blow of Lady Hobhouse's death, which profoundly modified her niece's plans. No longer was it of any use to hurry back to England, as she had intended, and she felt that, instead, she ought to remain in South Africa, further to watch over the development of the Industries.

Margaret Gillett, from her personal experience, adds the following account of the work at Philippolis:

'The enterprise of introducing hand-spinning, dyeing and weaving, and, later on, lace making, into South Africa gave Emily Hobhouse a scope very congenial to her nature. She was happy in this creative period: all her faculties were called into use in organizing the industries and in experimenting in the production of sound and useful articles possessing the inherent beauty of their hand processes. She was always at her best when she had a project to shape and launch. Her spirits would rise as her schemes grew and no effort was too great. Her mind kindled with inventiveness and boldness in planning and yet no detail was too small for attention if it seemed necessary to her scheme.

'She set herself at Philippolis to prove the possibility of

treating South African wool by hand processes under South African conditions. She succeeded in an astonishingly short time in doing this, thanks partly to her own energy, thoroughness and resourcefulness, and to her power of leadership; but thanks also (as she always declared) to the way in which the Rev. Colin Fraser had prepared the people of the district for the enterprise and had brought suitable pupils to the school. Her name was then a magic word among the Boers, as it still is; and Mr. Fraser guided the enthusiasm which it aroused.

‘There were difficulties, for the country still lay war-stricken. Farm houses were not yet rebuilt; part of the village was in ruins: life’s usual requisites were not only dear but difficult to come by: tools were lacking, coal and timber scarcely obtainable, and water had to be fetched a long way. The technical processes of the industries, which are traditional in old countries, had to be pioneered afresh at Philippolis, and often an alternative route had to be found. But, though there might be difficulties, there were no hesitations: a way round there must be, and her intrepid spirit, with its quick judgment and imaginative grasp, did not fail to find it and to lead her little party through.

‘The earliest products were clumsy and imperfect, but they proved her case; and on this experience it was justifiable to beg for more funds from the English supporters, and to secure those technical instructions under whose teaching materials of first-class standard and extreme beauty were afterwards produced.

‘Miss Hobhouse used the funds with careful skill and in her hands every sixpence seemed to go as far as a

shilling would with most people. The housekeeping was often helped by gifts from neighbours, ranging from a jar of bottled fruit to a sucking pig or a sheep. She realized as clearly as any business man that time was money, and therefore pushed this stage of her work through at full gallop. Her object was to carry the industries on by English help till the Transvaal and the Orange Free State should have self-government and should take over the responsibility.

'She had the artist's high standard in appreciating the difference between amateurishness and the requirements of her experts. But she had also the instinct of a pioneer in making the best of any available appliance or accommodation in order to get on with the work. This inspired pupils and teachers alike with independence and helped them to feel that they each had a share in a great work for South Africa. It might be the humble work of a spinner who was asked to spin a thread fine enough for a tweed suitable for South African wear; or it might be the exciting task of producing a required shade in the hanks of yarn from the dye-pot; or it might lie in the discriminating care of weaving a tapestry from some pattern designed by Miss Hobhouse to suit the conditions of their industry.

'The position had its embarrassments. There was nothing the Boers would not do at her word, interpreted as it was for them in the Philippolis District by Mr. Fraser, the beloved pastor who had shared imprisonment with his flock in a camp in the war. For she, the Englishwoman who had crossed the seas with mercy at the time of their great distress, wore in their eyes a halo, and every generous instinct reacted towards her. But

this placed her on a pedestal, which is a dangerous situation when it comes to real life among admirers. She herself would warn her English colleagues against idealizing Boers, and the Boers also had to discover that their heroic Miss Hobhouse was very human.

'In order to preserve time and strength for her work, she had to live withdrawn from all the leisurely socialities of Boer country life, and she often kept at a distance those who would have pressed around her, not only those who were merely curious but also those who were really friendly. She shrank from the English, who she felt had condemned her. But indeed her re-appearance in South Africa so shortly after the animosities of war was often able to dispel those impressions among the English which had made her notorious rather than famous; because, though she never stooped to ingratiate herself, this striking and vital woman who was creating something in the place of destruction, was exactly what they admired in an Englishwoman.

'She suffered the disadvantage which all women know who are engaged in important work, — that she had no wife who could represent her socially and bridge those chasms which can only be bridged by social ties. She was naturally sociable and loved friendship, and this enforced isolation caused suffering to herself and disappointment to the Boers, while it gave the English small chance for seeing how charming and interesting and able a person their terrible compatriot was.

'But the industries were to Miss Hobhouse like a child for whom no effort and no sacrifice were too great; and, working in this single-minded spirit herself, she

naturally drew out the utmost capacity and devotion of those who worked under her.

'Whatever the ultimate fate of the industries may be, they were the means, under her influence, not only of building sound material into the fabric of life in that time of poverty, but of stirring up hope and helping self-respect and liberating the unseen powers to perform their task. The tasks she had "in hours of insight willed" were often, as she would say, "in hours of gloom fulfilled," and bitterly though she suffered later in some disappointments over this work, at the end she would always dwell with happiness on the recollections of those ardent days, and with confidence in their abiding value.'

After discussion with Generals Botha and Smuts and much investigation of possible centres, a decision was come to, to start another school at Langlaagte, close to Johannesburg. Here was an orphanage under the Rev. Mr. Kriel, who then had 250 children under his care.

'He proposed we should teach those of over twelve years. Some Philippolis pupils could come and help teach these children. Mr. Kriel was prepared to offer a house belonging to the Orphanage at Langlaagte. The village was but a quarter of an hour from Johannesburg by rail, and in spite of adjacent mines and gangs of Chinese it was quiet. Mr. Kriel also offered us a free supply of water, one of the greatest inducements. The workroom was bad, being but a worn out zinc shed with mud floor, but might serve temporarily. The Orphanage had a resident carpenter whom Mr. Kriel wisely thought would be helpful to us. There was no

suggestion that we should confine ourselves to the orphans: we should be free to take girls from elsewhere if convenient. Nor was it proposed we should become part and parcel of the institution in any way. It seemed possible, and indeed it was the only possible plan which offered itself.'

Finally, this proposal was accepted, and arrangements made to staff two schools, which entailed increased hard work for already overworked helpers.

'About that time the preparation of wool, its cleaning, picking and carding, had become a serious question. The looms demanded an increasing supply of yarn. In the school, time and space both failed. So we hit on the plan of getting the old people and young children in the village to prepare the wool, offering so much per pound. A number came forward to do this work, and when more cards came from England that process was also done in the village. My object was to get the spinning also done at home and the hanks of yarn brought to the school. The lack of wheels retarded this step. Davel had already made four and copies had been made by fathers and brothers of some of our pupils, but many more were needed. The dearth of wood and its high cost when brought from the coast was a bar. In despair I had written to Europe of the need for a "ship-load of wheels." That wish floating away like a winged seed fell into the hearts of the Swiss people. There, fostered and nurtured by Mme. degli Asinelli of Geneva and Mme. d'Orelli of Basel and others, my audacious wish bore fruit in a veritable ship-load! These precious wheels, many of beautiful workmanship, were heir-

looms, and I could not forget that under the skilful handling of the Swiss women had for centuries provided the yarn which their winter weaving turned into the clothing of a people. Mme. degli Asinelli was an indefatigable and devoted worker. Her pen was always busy, and kept the Swiss people and many French also informed of every development of the work, as well as collecting wheels, winders and accessories. Boer girls owe much to the generosity of the Swiss. I can never forget the day when I saw the great waggons coming in procession down the road piled high with cases containing spinning-wheels, and knew that my wish had been fulfilled.'

By August the teaching was begun: Emily Hobhouse suddenly found herself the 'Aunt' to 250 orphan nephews and nieces who shouted after her everywhere 'Auntie Hobhouse.' But the house was bitterly cold, without any fire-places, and worse still the work-shed was quite unsuitable, being an unlined iron room.

'The intense heat by day and great cold at night create moisture somehow or other, though everything is drought-stricken and parched. It condenses and falls on the machines, rusting and spoiling them. Covers of cloth or oil-cloth proved vain; the wet, which was nowhere else visible in that dry world, stood in drops upon the delicate machines, making so much oil necessary that the finished garment had oily spots. Moreover the sun was so intense that the machines had to be moved from the windows while the light further in proved too dim and eyes became strained! So our sorrow was not too great when word came that the municipality

intended sweeping that zinc building away. Later, friends found fresh premises for us.

'An event of first-class importance was finding Mrs. Goetzsche. This lady and her husband, an architect, had come from Denmark after the Boer War. Receiving an introduction I called upon her and found her with her looms. She was at work on a great piece of Gobelin tapestry, very fine. I at once recognized a first-class expert and an enthusiast. Particularly I was pleased with her blankets, a branch I very much desired to develop, as the duty was 20 per cent on those imported. She gave me most valuable hints and information about getting a supply of wheels and looms. Indeed, through her, I was able to get wheels from Scandinavia at £1 apiece. From that time Mrs. Goetzsche became our standby and for three years our competent and resourceful head teacher. We felt that on different lines we had now really good teachers both at Langlaagte and Philippolis.'

At the end of the year Emily Hobhouse lost the help of Margaret Clark, upon which she so very greatly depended, and which left her very desolate. She writes:

'I shall never forget the blank pain of Margaret's departure. I had little hope of her return. It seemed hardly possible we could hold on without her. I took her into Johannesburg and saw her off. My house seemed very empty when she had left it, and the work arduous, especially in the hot December weather. My staff dispersed for Christmas, and left alone with Black Joanna, I packed her a box of groceries and some tinned beef into a trolley and off we went to a friend's

farm which we had permission to use for holidays. By a chapter of accidents my tent did not arrive, so I ensconced myself in a summer-house open to the four winds, and there Joanna and I spent that lonely Christmas on a fare of corned beef and boiled rice. Fortunately there were no thunderstorms and the nights were quite perfect in their beauty, the air sweet and pure after Langlaagte and its pigs. Those open-air nights did much to restore my strength and I spent the three days writing and taking stock of our position. Looking back on the year I could feel a fairly satisfactory start had been made. It had of course been largely experimental. During the coming year we might hope to see clearer the best lines of development.'

Another young Quaker helper had also come from England, Marion Rowntree (now Wilkinson), who showed, so Miss Hobhouse wrote, a special capability for making friends with the Boer girls and their families. She took general control at Philippolis, whilst Mrs. Goetzsche and Miss Cloete supervised at Langlaagte; Miss Hobhouse, herself, feeling that her stay in the country could not be prolonged indefinitely, and that consequently there was wisdom in withdrawing from the detailed every-day work, arranged to build a house for herself at Bellevue, Johannesburg.

She writes:

'This place, though fruitful of trouble at the time, was economical and proved a good investment which was never regretted. In any case failing strength was rapidly obliging me to abandon physical work such as

weaving and dyeing. I could not stoop, was constantly giddy, and a martyr to nose-bleeding. Indeed I felt very ill, and undoubtedly I was. But our family has never run quickly to doctors, and it never occurred to me to seek advice. Had I done so, I should no doubt have been saved future break-down and these long years of recumbent life. A glorious view of the Magal-
isberg range decided my choice of a site, but in going so high (nearly 6,000ft.) I unconsciously increased my physical disability. The purity of the air, most refreshing after Langlaagte, was a relief, and early in the year I moved, regretting the companionship left behind. It was time, for there were foreshadowings that Langlaagte would not long remain suitable. The Orphanage authorities had pressing uses for the house we rented, and as they did not at that time deem our teaching of special value for the orphans (in fact, shortly after, all were withdrawn) there was no object in remaining in such depressing surroundings after our year's tenancy was concluded. I felt Constance Cloete, accustomed to the rare beauty of Uitkijk, showed real self-sacrifice in staying so long with us. The better water supply anticipated at Langlaagte had proved delusive; the one tap was sadly inadequate and even uncertain. From Johannesburg I would go three times a week to Langlaagte to give lessons in design, and listen to Mrs. Goetsche's excellent lectures on the theory of weaving. The rest of the week was filled with a heavy correspondence, reports for Europe, drawing designs for workers of both schools, and countless duties connected with them. Perplexed by the trend of affairs in Langlaagte, I visited Pretoria to consult General Smuts. He strongly ad-

vised, should the lack of water and other more considerable disabilities at Langlaagte prove insurmountable, that we should seek temporary premises in Johannesburg suburb rather than spend our money on building, an idea which had been proposed. He urged that we should train girls, as many as our means would allow, arranging to keep on till Responsible Government was in power. He held out hopes that were almost assurances that Government would support industrial schools with a grant.

'Acting on his advice I searched in Johannesburg and with the kind help of Mr. Poultney found premises a few minutes' walk from my cottage. These offered accommodation far superior to any yet found, and the water supply seemed really adequate, for it came from three sources – the earth, the skies, and the municipality! We took the place for twelve months. The elections, which would settle the colour of the Government, were not due till February of the ensuing year.'

Though so fully engaged with the arduous work of the Industries Emily Hobhouse continued to take that deep interest in political affairs which was second nature to her. She was greatly distressed at what she frequently felt to be a lack of understanding of the Boer nature by the politicians at home, and was conscious that she was in too great a hurry to get all the wrongs of the war righted, as her friends at home sometimes pointed out. But such feeling was evidence of the deep earnestness of her desire for the welfare of South Africa. She felt herself in a sense as an interpreter between that country and her own, knowing

both intimately as she did, and she could not rid herself of a sense of responsibility to her Boer friends for Great Britain's actions. Sometimes, too, she found herself intimately connected with South African affairs as she tells in one interesting episode.

Early in 1907 the elections took place which resulted in the triumph of Het Volk [the forerunner of the South African party], and much speculation was concerned with the choice of a premier, Sir Richard Solomon being one of those mentioned. Just at this time Emily Hobhouse paid a visit to President and Mrs. Steyn.

'The President was eager to discuss affairs and showed great anxiety as to the choice of the Premier. He would not hear of Sir Richard Solomon. He insisted that Botha, and Botha alone must fill the post. Then and there he solemnly charged me with a message to General Botha. He said I must make opportunity to see him without delay and must tell him from himself, President Steyn, that he must take the Premiership, putting aside every personal disinclination. I promised to bear the message, and in a few days found a chance in Johannesburg. It was at the close of a crowded Het Volk meeting. As the platform was emptying, I drew General Botha aside to deliver my message. I can see it now, the confusion and stir as people were leaving, the dim corner to which we had retreated, and Botha's perturbation as I unfolded my message. He was very much put about. I had not anticipated such strong opposition. He refused even to consider the idea. Again and again he asseverated, "I will not be Prime Minister, Miss Hobhouse; I cannot, and I will not."

“But, General Botha, President Steyn says you must be.”

“Nothing will induce me, you must not ask me; I would rather go over the border.”

“But the President says there is no one else. He says Sir Richard Solomon is not strong enough; he says you must put personal disinclination aside, and you must be Premier.”

“Miss Hobhouse, you must tell the President that he must not ask it; that I cannot and will not.”

I replied, “I can’t take that message; if you think it over you will see there is no one else.”

But Botha ended as he began by asseverations that he could not and would not. I followed up my words by a letter to confirm what had been said and beg that he would think it over quietly.

It was not long after that, happening to be in Pretoria, I met General Botha alone when walking from Arcadia to Sunnyside. His acceptance of the Premiership had been announced the day previous. Perhaps, knowing his feeling, it was ill-taste of me to congratulate him. It was too soon; he could not speak, and breaking down entirely, burst into tears.

Later Mrs. Botha told me how hard he had found it, how at first he had refused to think of it, how he sat for hours on the stoep fighting with himself before he would answer Lord Selborne’s summons, and with what reluctance he went at last.

To most this incident will read like a fairy-tale. But it is true, and years after I reminded him of the incident.

Whatever views may be held of Botha’s policy as Premier, in the after years, there can be no doubt that

his consent to take the office was an act of supreme self-sacrifice, for he saw clearly ahead and knew all that it must and did involve.'

The year 1907 brought a step forward in the development of the industry, in the arrival of Mr. Milroy, a professional dyer and weaver from England. It was a satisfaction to the amateurs who had been struggling with the difficulties, to find that even a professional had to experiment and learn many things afresh under new climatic conditions.

'He possessed however the knowledge and resource to apply modifications and soon conquered difficulties. In the school cupboards I was ashamed to find many rolls of woven cloth, supposed to be ready for sale, but full of grease and harsh with sand. With these Mr. Milroy gave a useful demonstration in the scouring of cloth. Suds were boiled, all available baths put in the court, and Mr. Milroy, with trousers turned up to the knees, trod out the cloth in the baths. The girls, grouped to watch, were astounded to see what came out of the cloth they had supposed clean. One must admit the excuse that scarcity of water made all scouring processes a difficulty.'

Mr. Milroy's serious illness, almost on arrival, however, threw fresh anxiety and work on Miss Hobhouse, added to by the illness of her maid. Her friends realized that a complete change was necessary for her and suggested her returning to Europe with General Botha and his daughter, which she did in April. By this means, too, she was able to get into touch with her Committee at home, which was supporting the work by raising funds and interest,

Consultation by correspondence being very slow and involved, it was natural that difficulties as to policy, or details, should occur, and personal discussion became very necessary.

Miss Hobhouse writes:

‘Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Ellis, whose daughter (now Lady Parmoor) was acting as Honorary Secretary to the Committee, at once offered their drawing-room for a gathering. They felt the subscribers would like to meet the Miss Bothas. Lord Courtney was in the Chair. The scene came back to me very vividly lately when reading the Life of Mr. Ellis. He describes the meeting in his diary. Helen Botha had been asked to speak, but instead she read a letter from her father. After thanking the subscribers for their support General Botha went on to say:

‘I have to thank Miss Hobhouse for starting this industry, and I feel sure when I look at all the difficulties she has had to contend with that I cannot sufficiently thank her for her noble work, and my earnest hope is that this industry will prove as profitable to South Africa as the old Huguenot industries did to England. . . . In starting this industry in South Africa, Miss Hobhouse has done as much as anybody for the co-operation of Briton and Boer, and I feel sure that as the industry grows, so will the good feeling between the English and Dutch spread throughout the whole country.”’

It was about the same time that an Exhibition of South African products being held in London the opportunity was taken to exhibit some of the work already accomplished in the weaving schools. The present writer, who was then

Treasurer to the Industries Fund, represented the Committee on the occasion of the visit of King Edward and Queen Alexandra and King George, then Prince of Wales, and retains a vivid memory of trying, ineffectively, to assume proper royal manners under difficulties. First, a headlong rush through the crowd to answer the royal summons, and then a futile attempt to get behind the stall through too small a hole, resulted in finding the King and Queen refreshingly amused at her discomfiture! But the incident ended triumphantly in their purchasing goods and showing much interest in the work.

In May, Emily Hobhouse paid a visit to Switzerland, to express personally her gratitude to the kind friends there who had done so much to help forward her work. But she was hardly fit for the journey, and it was fortunate that she had with her Miss Ellis (now Lady Parmoor), who was able to spare her every avoidable effort. Her last week in Europe was spent with her brother Leonard in Normandy, and she then sailed in the *Saxon*, accompanied by a new and very dear friend, a St. Bernard dog named Caro, who proved a delightful companion. His early death was a correspondingly real sorrow.

On her return to South Africa Miss Hobhouse turned her attention to the arrangements for the permanent organization of her industry. As has already been hinted it was her desire that it should be taken over by the Government in some form or another, when she could no longer supervise it. Her own account of this must be given.

‘On my return from England in early July I found the new Ministry firm in the saddle, and General Smuts (as Colonial Secretary) prepared to discuss industrial education in detail. Mr. Adamson, Head of the Education

Department, was also in consultation about it. It was considered advisable the School should move to Pretoria to be under the Administrative Eye. In spite of obvious advantages I was somewhat fearful on climatic grounds, the heat being so much greater. But I was adamant on the point that such a move must depend upon Mrs. Goetzsche's consent. She was everything to the still infant industry. Better small premises with her than superior ones without her. Her knowledge and power of imparting it were unrivalled. Anxiety on this point was, however, set at rest, for notwithstanding inconvenience Mrs. Goetzsche finally decided to accept the Government's offer to teach in Pretoria, arranging to return to her husband in Johannesburg for week-ends. My own removal followed suit. Though sorry to leave my cottage there was compensation in the lower altitude of Pretoria which gave physical relief. I was conscious I was near the end of my tether physically, and in any case the three years planned for were fast running out. I intended to hold on as long as health and means permitted. I knew the work was approaching a critical stage when most careful organization would be needed, and fresh controllers could not in the nature of things have the judgment born of experience. I felt in honour bound to the Government also to continue to guide and help the work as long as I was able.

'By August I was free to report progress to the London Committee. The estimates had been before the House and the vote for Industrial Schools, of which there were also some under missionary guidance in the north, was passed without question. It was a moment of great

relief for me and for Margaret.¹ We were very grateful to the Transvaal Government for their confidence in our undertaking and gratified that in spite of many imperfections it had received this token of appreciation. Yet beneath this contentment a little worm of doubt gnawed at my heart. The release from financial responsibility might, probably would, carry with it loss of power to initiate, guide or restrain. I believed that the work, after many experimental vicissitudes, was finding at last a sure footing and was on the right road to a realization of its aims. But the moment was critical. It was a child that must still be led by the hand of an experienced nurse. To become a firmly planted national industry it needed still the fostering care of one who had studied the matter for years and was conversant with every detail of the interdependent processes. There was fear lest, taken under the control of strangers who, however interested and well-meaning, did not and could not know anything about it, its guidance should be unwise and the effort be marred or ruined. 'I unburdened these fears to General Smuts who quite grasped and even, I think, shared my anxiety. He wished the work to develop on the lines laid down. He told me he must appoint a Board to whose care the Public Funds would be assigned and of this I felt very glad. He said that he wished me to be in a position of authority on that Board when formed and suggested I should take the position of "Adviser" to that body of persons. Taking this word "Adviser" at its face value, my natural fears were set at rest, and I accepted the office with a light heart.

¹ Margaret Clark had recently returned to South Africa.

'At the first meeting of the Board when formed premises were decided upon, and as Mrs. Goetzsche had promised to continue as Principal we arranged to move the School bag and baggage by October 1 when our lease expired. Margaret was to remain Organizing Secretary as long as she stayed in the country, but her six months' visit was fast nearing its end. I had seen disappointingly little of her – for after my return from Europe she was much occupied in visiting Free State Schools and only joined me in Pretoria in October.

'We were soon in full swing at the new Weverij in President Street. It had been good practice for the girls to learn to take down and put up their looms. The heat became intensely trying. I note that writing home October 27th, I mentioned the thermometer was 94° in the shade. As all was going well I was able to escape from this heat to Philippolis to meet Milroy on his return from Europe and discuss the fresh arrangements which were to follow Responsible Government so soon to take office in the Orange River Colony also. I paid, also, my long-deferred visit to Olive Schreiner at De Aar where she and her husband were then living. This stands out as one of my chief pleasures of those years.'

After this visit Miss Hobhouse spent Christmas with her great friends President and Mrs. Steyn, hearing from him of his project, since accomplished, of a worthy memorial to the women and children who died in the Concentration Camps.

CHAPTER XIV

DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND TRANSFER TO THE GOVERNMENTS

1908

THE year 1908 saw the hoped-for culmination of handing over the spinning and weaving industries to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Governments, though not, as we shall see, with all the satisfaction for which Miss Hobhouse hoped. The work had spread and developed in every direction – in this respect quite beyond her hopes. The London Committee's final report (December 1908) shows that in the Orange Free State there were weaving and spinning schools at Bloemfontein, Philippolis, Winburg (3 schools), Ficksburg, Bethlehem and Smithfield; spinning schools only at Boshof, Brandfort, Heilbron and Bultfontein. In the Transvaal the weaving schools were at Pretoria, Ermelo, Schweizer Renecke, Belfast and Lichtenburg, with spinning centres at Viededorp, Roseville, Irene, Heidelberg, Roodeport (East Transvaal), Bloemhof farms, Standerton farms, Lydenberg and Rustenberg (just beginning) and Honingsnest Kranz. In addition there were basket-making and leather-work classes started. The London Committee Balance Sheet shows subscriptions and donations for the support of the work of £1,635 between February 1907 and October 1908.

The success of the work was realized particularly at the Cape Town Exhibition in April 1908, which Miss Hobhouse describes in a letter:

'WYNBERG,

'May 3rd, 1908.

'We had a three days' Exhibition in the beautiful old Good Hope Hall – spacious and light enough to set off the goods. We hung the walls on both sides the entire length with heavy rugs of many hues, which gave a glowing effect – almost Oriental. . . . Mr. Merriman opened it with a *very* good speech, and *all* the chief people of Cape Town were present.

'We had a good number of costumes made from our cloths by a French tailor, amongst them a tweed travelling costume made for Mrs. Merriman, and a really beautiful long white cloth coat made for Mrs. Sauer, and turned back with embroidery and so on.

'The show had hardly opened when Hepworth, a large firm of outfitters with 25 branches throughout South Africa, came and offered to buy the whole of the tweeds – £170 worth. I was obliged to refuse, as we had offered them to the general public, and gentlemen were selecting their own. But, honestly, the tailors here have pursued me till I have no peace, and write me incessant letters which I don't know how to answer.

'It was quite a revelation to the Cape people how far on our girls have got, and the artistic work was greatly admired. Several people wanted to buy the pomegranate portière tapestry, which was considered very handsome. . . . Members of Parliament hurrying home to distant provinces, bought rolls of tweed, and were seen wending their way down to the station like black ants, each carrying a roll of tweed under his arm.

'The Premier bought an ulster length, and so did the

Governor; the Speaker, Mr. James Molteno, bought a suit, and his tailor tells him it will *never* wear out, and maybe this is at once its merit and its drawback.'

General Smuts, too, wore a suit of it, but was reported to say that he felt like a female ostrich in it. Miss Hobhouse considered the men-folk very feeble who found it scratchy and uncomfortable, and told them they looked very handsome. She adds:

'So it is worn in the Transvaal as a patriotic duty with a very bad grace, far different from the Cape where even the editor of the *Cape Times* walks proudly about preening himself and saying: "I'm dressed in Boer tweed!"'

Whatever disappointments were to follow, these extracts will show to what real success Emily Hobhouse had attained. She had to a great extent conquered the difficulties of production under new conditions, and had shown that South Africa need not be dependent on importation to obtain practical, useful, and above all, beautiful, goods. This was indeed a solid achievement worthy to be permanently maintained by the Government.

The schools were beset with visitors of all kinds.

'The other day appeared a small person of four years of age, with big blue eyes, who said her name was Emily Hobhouse, and she had come to see the "wheels go round." Her mother was a young girl I had met in Norval's Point Camp seven years ago, and had seen much of there, and now she brought me her little girl. This was one of the nice sort of visitors.'

But in contrast with success came bitter disappointment and disillusionment, which Emily was in no fit state of health to discount. She herself discussed with the authorities, first in the Transvaal and later in the Orange Free State, the conditions under which the industries were to be taken over by the Governments. A Board of Control was formed in each case, though the constitution was not similar, and in the Transvaal the position of Chairman of the Board was offered to and refused by Miss Hobhouse, but she was appointed official adviser. Sums of between £4,000 and £5,000 for the first year's expenses were voted by each Government for the support of the industry. A few details of the subsequent history of the industries in both Colonies will be found in the Appendix.

A consultation with General Smuts brought the advice to have patience a little longer and give it a trial for another six months.

The particular cause of differences with the Board appears to have been the question of maintaining in entirety the principle of hand work. Emily Hobhouse believed that any departure from this spelt failure to her ideal. The members of the Board were warm in their appreciation of her work and aims, but they realized that the Boer girls were both keen on increased output, and unwilling to undertake the tedious and arduous processes of hand scouring and carding, which could be equally well done by machinery. Convinced of this, they felt obliged to institute the change, for the good of the industry, though Emily Hobhouse, in her overstrained condition, failed to see in it anything but an overriding of her experience, and she felt it as a very keen blow.

Perhaps after all these years one can understand that the very fact of all she had given was itself part of the reason

why she needed to leave; for her willing frame was utterly exhausted and the transition from a voluntary to a Governmental basis needed perforce fresh brains and ideas.

Miss Hobhouse accepted the inevitable and returned to Europe, accompanied by Johanna Rood, a young Boer girl whom she was taking to learn lace work in the hope of starting that as an industry which had been her first dream. Before leaving, her portrait was painted by Hugo Naudé at the request of the ladies of Pretoria, and presented to Miss Hobhouse, who, however, returned it to be hung in the museum of the town.

In mid-October she left Lourenço Marques for England by the eastern route, and there ends the autobiography from which so many of the previous pages have been taken. Strength failed her, for the work was done at the end of her life, when, it must be remembered, her state of health not unnaturally made her see the past in a gloomy light. For the following years the material available is far less full and detailed.

CHAPTER XV

LIFE IN ITALY AND LAST VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA

1909 ONWARDS

THE next few years were not marked by any new developments and were, it is to be feared, sad years, full of suffering for Emily Hobhouse, for her health was very severely affected by all she had gone through. Indeed, during the remaining years of her life, she was a physical wreck, worn out by the incessant demands made upon her strength and vitality. Had she taken to a completely invalid life, it would have been little wonder; instead of which she maintained a keen interest in world affairs, refusing to be conquered by physical difficulties, though her friends had sometimes to admit that these produced in her a warped judgment. She went to Italy early in 1909 with Johanna Rood,¹ the Boer girl who had returned with her to study lace-making, and the present writer. We stayed in Rome, Bologna and Venice, and after my return in April they went back to Rome, where Emily Hobhouse intended to make a home, feeling unable to face the cold of England. She was not really fit for the cares of life, and badly needed someone to look after her. In fact, these years were full of attempts to get the rest for body and mind which was so necessary. Instead of which frequent changes from one flat to another, or of one maid for

¹ Miss Rood (now Mrs. Osborne) became a teacher of a lace school at Koppies, Orange Free State, founded by Emily Hobhouse.

another, took all and more than all the physical energy she possessed.

Unfortunately, she had not facility in the art of managing her life. She had, as we have noted, strong likes and dislikes, and, with advancing years, many physical disabilities. Yet, to the onlooker, it would seem as if she rushed into plans, either for herself or for her work, without any due regard to such limitations, only to find herself thoroughly embarrassed or uncomfortable, and perhaps forced to make fresh plans after much expenditure of time, trouble and money. For instance, one of her flats in Rome was at the top of 100 steps, up which she had to be carried daily.

She took this flat because she was charmed with the view of the Forum which it afforded. Undoubtedly, her slender income was strained to the utmost to keep up with her wide demands on it, and this was a constant difficulty to her; it added pathos to her already pathetic life to feel that very many were the discomforts and difficulties she might have been spared, had she had the knack of seeing what house or what plans would really best meet her needs.

In Rome she found many congenial friends including the Marchesa de Viti and Signor Boni, the famous archæologist, who suggested to her that she should live on the Campagna and begin reforming the homes of the uneducated *contadini*. She also enjoyed from time to time visits from her relatives, especial joys perhaps, being those from her young relatives, from her favourite nephew Oliver, her brother Leonard's son, and from Eleanor, daughter of her cousin, Henry Hobhouse. Since her Uncle and Aunt's death, her brother had more and more become her closest friend, and it was a great deprivation to be so far from him and to see him so rarely.

Before her return from South Africa she had heard mention of the idea of a national monument to be erected at Bloemfontein to the honour of the women and children who had died in the Concentration Camps in the War. This, naturally, appealed strongly to her imagination, and when she received an invitation in 1913 to come to South Africa to unveil it she determined to make the effort, despite her enfeebled health. It was naturally a very grave disappointment to herself and to her friends when she found it impossible to fulfil the engagement. Having got as far as Beaufort West in Cape Colony she was advised by her friends to relinquish the attempt. Nevertheless, her commemoration speech was distributed to the vast audience and a few passages will show the tenor of the message she had wished to deliver at so much cost to herself.

‘Alongside of the honour we pay the Sainted Dead, forgiveness must find a place. I have read that when Christ said, “Forgive your enemies,” it is not only for the sake of the enemy He says so, but for one’s own sake, “because love is more beautiful than hate.” Surely your dead, with the wisdom that now is theirs, know this. To harbour hate is fatal to your own self-development, it makes a flaw, for hatred, like rust, eats into the soul of a nation, as of an individual.

‘As your tribute to the dead, bury unforgiveness and bitterness at the foot of this monument forever. Instead, forgive, for you can afford it, the rich who were greedy of more riches, the statesmen who could not guide affairs, the bad generalship that warred on weaklings and babes – forgive – for so only can you rise to full nobility of character and a broad and noble national life,

‘For what really matters is *character*. History clearly teaches this.

‘In the present day, minds are strangely confused, eyes are blinded, and it is the almost universal idea that the all important thing for a country is Material Prosperity. It is false. Noble Character forms a great nation. Statesmen who aim at material prosperity as if it were an end in itself, forget or have not recognized, that too often great national prosperity is accompanied by deterioration of national character and of the highest well-being of the people.

‘For it is not the rich and prosperous who matter most but you who live the simplest lives, and upon whom in the last resort, if trial comes, falls the test of the national character.

‘This thought ennobles the humblest life. The dead we now honour met that test and did not shrink. They died for freedom; they clung to it with unfaltering trust that God would make it the heritage of their children. The years have brought changes they little dreamed, but South Africa is one and it is free. Its freedom is based on all they did; they suffered; they died; they could do no more. The supreme offering was made, the supreme price paid. Their sacrifice still bears fruit. Even could the graves open and give up their dead, we would not wish those women back, nor have them relinquish the great position they have won. Not even the children would we recall, the children, who – counting the vanished years – would stand before us now, some 20,000 youths and maidens, fair and comely – a noble array – peopling the too solitary veld. For who does not feel their spirit move amongst

us here to-day? Who fails to recognize the noble example by which they still live?

'In this vast throng can there be found one unresponsive soul? One heart that will not go hence filled with high resolve to live more worthy of the dead?'

'Your visible monument will serve to this great end – becoming an inspiration to all South Africans and to the women in particular. Generation after generation it will stand here pressing home in silent eloquence these great thoughts: In your hands and those of your children lie the power and freedom won; you must not merely maintain but increase the sacred gift. Be merciful towards the weak, the down-trodden, the stranger. Do not open your gates to those worst foes of freedom – tyranny and selfishness. Are not these the withholding from others in your control the very liberties and rights which you have valued and won for yourselves? So will the monument speak to you.'

'My Friends, – Throughout the world the Woman's day approaches; her era dawns. Proudly I unveil this Monument to the brave South African women, who, sharing the danger that beset their land and dying for it, affirmed for all times and for all peoples the power of Woman to sacrifice life and more than life to the common weal.

'This is your South African Monument; but it is more; for "their story is not graven only on stone, over their native earth."

'We claim it as a *world monument*, of which all the World's Women should be proud; for your dead by their brave simplicity have spoken to Universal

Womanhood, and henceforth they are "woven into the stuff" of every woman's life.'

President Steyn, in his speech at the ceremony, thus referred to the disappointment occasioned by Miss Hobhouse's absence:

'Before I ask Mrs. Steyn to unveil this monument, I should like, in the name of our people, to express our deep regret that Miss Hobhouse, after having journeyed thousands of miles, and having nearly reached Bloemfontein, has been obliged to return to the coast, owing to her very weak condition, and is thus prevented from being present and unveiling this monument.

'We know that from the beginning, she practically risked her life in undertaking this journey. She was willing to take this risk, in order to pay her last tribute to our women and children whom she loved and honoured, and for whom in the past, she had done so very much. Her self-sacrifice in the interest of our peoples awakened in us a feeling of deepest reverence and gratitude. The name of Emily Hobhouse is one of the loved names in South Africa; and from many a mother's heart this silent prayer is still uttered: God bless her.'

This depth of feeling for her was emphasized to me by the present Prime Minister (General Hertzog), who told me that he is convinced that in his country no other non-South African holds so warm a place in the hearts of the people.

CHAPTER XVI

WAR-TIME VISITS TO BELGIUM AND GERMANY

1914

To one who had such intense experiences of war's cruelties and so vivid an imaginative sympathy as Miss Hobhouse, the World War brought untold suffering. From the very first she bent her energies towards bringing the idea of peace to the public attention, and every effort of any sort in this direction had her warm support. She did not fear to go entirely counter to public opinion in her advocacy of this unpopular cause, and continued her efforts throughout the years of war at the price of great misunderstanding and consequent suffering.

To this end she spent three months in 1915 working at the Women's International Bureau in Amsterdam. But this alone did not satisfy her, and she eventually determined on the unusual step of a journey to Germany in war-time. When her action was afterwards publicly called in question, she assured the Foreign Office that in asking for a *visa* to Italy in 1915 she had no idea of going to Germany; when in Switzerland, however, she saw and took an opportunity of making an attempt which, on principle, she believed to be right and important.¹

¹ Questions asked about the matter in the House of Commons elicited the information that the simple act of entering enemy territory did not consti-

She thus explains her motives:

'Holding, as I do, that a war is not only wrong in itself, but a crude mistake, I stand wholly outside its passions and feel, while it lasts, a spectator of a scene I deplore, but with which I am in no sense a part. I give, have given and will give nothing to any fund to aid war or warriors. My small means are devoted entirely to help non-combatants who suffer in consequence of war, and in supporting every movement making for Peace. I believe it useless to soften or civilize war – that there is no such thing as "civilized war"; there is war between civilized people certainly, but as we now see, that becomes more barbarous than war between barbarians. I believe that the only thing is to strike at the root of the evil and demolish war itself as the great and impossible Barbarity. Hence all the Governments concerned in making this war are to blame in my eyes, none better than the others, though possibly some worse. They follow blindly an outworn and impossible system that must be swept away. I blame them all and am against them all equally. On the other hand my heartfelt sympathies lie with all the peoples of Europe, sacrificed, ruined and destroyed by their blind incompetent rulers. They also are to blame in so far as they allow their better judgment to be led astray by their rulers and do not rise up in a body to stay the tide of bloodshed. But they

tute a punishable offence although it was in consequence of this action prohibited under D.O.R.A. Such act would only become punishable if 'it amounts to adherence or is otherwise aggravated by the circumstances,' or if it was accompanied by false declarations. Lord Cecil stated that 'I have no reason to suppose that she made any false statements to us.'

are all to be pitied, for the poverty, starvation, misery and universal ruin fall upon their shoulders, besides disease, destruction and countless worse evils.'

The winter of 1915-16 spent in Rome having much improved her health, Emily Hobhouse set about finding the way to fulfil her desire to go as a messenger of peace and goodwill to the people of Germany, and to make a tour of investigation in Belgium. She explained her plan to Baron von Romberg, the German Minister in Berne, who promised to forward her request to the proper authorities. At last, after waiting a month, the permission for the journey arrived, which was to be followed by the conditions qualifying it. But receiving at the same time an order from the British Minister to come to the Legation, Miss Hobhouse decided to depart at once, realizing that the authorities would certainly not countenance her plan if disclosed to them. Even though the conditions did arrive before she left, in the hurry of arrangements she did not see them, which she afterwards much regretted, as they might have made an alteration in her plans.

She writes:

'I was hastily introduced to young von Rosenberg, the Courier who undertook to meet me next morning at Basel with the motor, and I was directed to a quiet and unknown temperance inn, the Blue Cross "Blaukreuzhaus," which lay in a quiet street. Precisely - with German punctuality - at 7.20 a.m. as advised, the courier drove up to the inn and found me with equal punctuality standing on the threshold with my bags and baskets. They hoisted these into the car and

off we went through the empty streets to the barrier some four kilometres distant. First there was the Swiss Customs which opened my things very perfunctorily, and then the long wooden arm of a level crossing was lifted a little, I slipped under, and lo! we were in Germany. In a moment of time one's whole mental orientation was changed – the foolishness of it all was startling – Nature had made no barrier – the earth and stones and grass were the same – one step only made the difference – between the country of a friend and of an enemy. No barrier but man or at least Governments had put up landmarks saying “here is all mine, there is all yours, our interests are different and each must look after his own.” But Nature had made no barrier – a long level road swept through green meadow land on both sides the same and the people actually speaking the same language. As Borngraber says in his *Bergpredigt*:

“Away with frontiers, down with all landmarks – you on that side, you on this – you are brothers, and the World is your Fatherland.”

‘To me it was a wonderful moment, and I felt as if in a dream.

‘Then Von Rosenberg – a nice youth – took in his pocket my German phrase book and dictionary, which I had begged leave to bring, and with no sort of difficulty we passed the German Customs. The car slipped through, and another kilometre or so slid by before we gained the little station, now the terminus, for German trains no longer run into Basel; the line is cut.’

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Reaching Cologne that evening the night was spent there, and Miss Hobhouse had her first experience of food shortage, finding a tiny cupful of soup, three thin slices of bread, and a very few cherries a decidedly unsatisfying meal. Arriving at the frontier town of Herbestal next day, Herr von Rosenberg handed over his charge to a new escort, Baron Falkenhausen Freiherr von Friedensthal, a young man who spoke English idiomatically, and was full of merri-ment, though probably nervous of his unwonted job, that of looking after an elderly lady of the so-called enemy nation.

The journey to Brussels showed surprisingly little war damage. On arrival

‘We drove straight to the hotel. In the train my Baron, as I called him, told me he had arranged to take me to the Astoria, and though it was delicately put, it was clearly enough conveyed to me that I had no choice in the matter. He also alluded to the conditions under which I had come – of which I was ignorant – and they certainly came rather as a blow because I had not been told them, and though prepared for rigid martial law, had hardly expected such strictures. He said I *must* go straight to Brussels, and it would be necessary that I should always sleep there, that it was not considered advisable that I should speak to Belgians, and that I was to be always accompanied by him. I expressed regret, because, as I said, such rules would militate against any chance of real investigation, but there I was and of course I should loyally obey the rules laid down. On that point he need have no doubts. He replied they had perfect confidence in me, but these were the rules and no exception could be made.

Therefore I arrived at the Astoria feeling on parole – and also that I should be able to learn very little beyond what my eyes would teach me of the actual material destruction. In fact I said to my Baron, “Your refusal to let me speak to Belgians is your greatest condemnation and in one way I learn more from the prohibition than all the people could tell me.”

“The hotel was very weird and silent. Several common rooms shut up. I had, however, a light cheerful room on the 4th Floor for 5 frs. and with hot and cold taps in the room. The Manager was told that I was under the protection of the Political Department, and I was told that I must not go out into the street, not even to enter a shop or buy a stamp, unless the Baron were with me. He took me to my room and left me to change and rest, asking that he might go back to bathe and dress as he had been up all night. He would come later to take me to the authorities.

“Very soon I went down to get some tea; the restaurant dining-room was dim and deserted, one waiter wandered forlornly about. I drank my tea and asked if I could have some boiled eggs for supper at 6 p.m. as I did not take late dinner. “Ah,” said the waiter with dejected air, “nous ne dinons jamais maintenant.” The hall was empty and no books or newspapers anywhere to be seen – only now and then an officer passed through – truly an Hotel Mort.

“At 4.30 the Baron appeared much freshened and we sallied forth – the evening was fine but cold. We took the tram and I noticed that he stood on the platform and would not come in and sit down amongst the people, and this continued throughout my stay. I

noticed at once the antagonistic looks of the people and he admitted that was the reason and that it was torture to him to be exposed to their insults – often silent ones. In fact, as the days went on I saw that he kept entirely aloof – would never, at my suggestion, ask the way of a Belgian in the street, nor go with me if he could avoid it into a shop.’

The first visit was of necessity to the Political Department, where Miss Hobhouse found some friendly officials to whom she confided her desire to obtain leave to go to Berlin, for which they promised to ask.

Then began a round of visits in Brussels and the neighbouring towns, in most inclement June weather. Miss Hobhouse and her glutinous guardian visited Antwerp, Malines, Louvain, Charleroi, and Aerschot, always passing like ghosts among the people they could not mix with, for such different reasons, and always returning at night to Brussels.

At Louvain Emily Hobhouse was met at the station by a young German officer who first described the events of the night of the 24th or 25th August. His story was that the town had been perfectly quiet, but that on that evening a rocket was fired, at which signal the German soldiery were fired upon from the surrounding houses in the square. During the ensuing fighting the famous Library caught fire, and when entered was found to contain no extinguisher, nor was a custodian to be found.

‘The books caught quickly and nothing could be done. The building is gutted and only the walls and gable remain to-day. The greater part of the old market is untouched, only (as in the Place des Peuples) some of

the houses are wrecked. Unfortunately as the flames streamed into the sky the wind blew the sparks across to the roof of the Cathedral, which also caught. The German officer, Captain Manteuffel, ordered a few houses adjacent to be blown up with dynamite to prevent the fire spreading to the Hotel de Ville, and that unique building stands unharmed and untouched. Manteuffel himself rescued the painting, one of great value, which hung in the Cathedral of St. Pierre, and carrying it out, had it placed in the Volksbank, where it is to this day. The fire was got under, only the roof and carillon being burnt and the heat melting the leaded panes the old glass fell down and was smashed. Already it is freshly roofed and the nave (still smelling of fire, boarded off) while service is held in the choir and transepts. Here I watched with deepest emotion German soldiers and Belgian citizens kneeling side by side at prayer. I gathered some relics of broken glass and molten lead. . . . Further, he told me that Louvain was a town of 44,000 inhabitants and 38,000 were living quietly there to-day. Perhaps an eighth of the town was destroyed, but as we drove about it seemed to me that that was a very large estimate. Other fine churches in the town and all the University buildings were unharmed. The exaggeration has been great. Only on the further side of the station a small suburb called Kesseloo is ruined, for the Belgian army making a sortie from Antwerp met the invaders there and they fought.'

Speaking of the strict rule which the Germans found to be necessary, Miss Hobhouse adds, 'I do not think their

martial law was any more strict than that under which I lived in South Africa – in the Free State.’

In an article in the *Daily News* of 4th September 1916 Miss Hobhouse thus describes the people waiting for the bounty of the American Relief Commission under Mr. Hoover:

‘Externally all is so fair in the beautiful city of Brussels that it would be difficult for visitors to bear in mind the existing tragedy were it not for the sharp reminder that recurs at sight of the long lines of people waiting to be fed in various quarters of the town. There is something very still and orderly, almost solemn in the aspect of these queues which renders them the more pathetic. They arrest and fascinate the observer, these women and girls with worn patient faces, each bearing her jug or platter. They embody and are eloquent of tragedy which reaches far beyond themselves and of which they know nothing. One halted involuntarily as before a passing funeral and then crept past them with a sense of awe and shame. And next day the same sight aroused the same feelings, and the next and the next, till slowly the mind grasped something of what it must mean to stand thus for hours day after day, week after week, month after month, mounting at last to years. For in these queues one faced a bit of war in every day garb, stripped of glory – war in its ultimate effect upon a civil population, misery and broken lives.’

One day Miss Hobhouse was allowed to visit one of the communal kitchens, and as she was taken thither by a special guide who did not speak English well, she had the opportunity of at least one conversation with a Belgian

— the Manager — who told her willingly about the arrangements.

‘He told me of the serious outbreak of tuberculosis affecting largely the glands of the neck and filling the hospitals with patients, particularly adolescents, who stood in need of extra food, very costly in these days. This disease was rapidly on the increase. The people received daily bread and soup and on stated days other things such as coffee, lard, sugar, rice, beans, etc., and a little money according to the numbers in the family. The food looked good — but not sufficient. This Belgian Manager looked very good humoured and smiling and willingly told me all I wished. Afterwards when I told my Baron about this tuberculosis he seemed seriously disturbed and even annoyed, and it was plain that I was *not* being allowed to know the truth.’

One day Miss Hobhouse was invited to the Reading Room of the Political Department, where she found all the English newspapers only two days old. The secret of how they got there so soon was not divulged to her.

At last, on the 17th June, arrived the hoped-for permission to go to Berlin. The Baron was almost as anxious for it as Emily Hobhouse, for it meant seeing his wife, from whom he had been separated almost ever since his marriage, and the two set off in good spirits, that very afternoon. Miss Hobhouse was installed in Berlin in a very comfortable hotel, and understood that she was no longer under such strict conditions as in Belgium and therefore from the first went about without her escort and followed her own free will, though this evidently caused much anxiety to him and to her companions. She very soon got in touch with Dr.

Elizabeth Rotten, who was working for English prisoners in Germany, as the Friends' Emergency Committee were doing in England, and she arranged for Miss Hobhouse to meet Dr. Alice Salomon, Dr. Siegmund Schultze and many others of their circle.

On the 19th June Miss Hobhouse had an interview with Herr von Jagow, then Foreign Minister, which she felt to be of especial significance. She had so long determined on her journey to Germany that she records that she felt nothing strange in the experience, and they had a most friendly talk lasting nearly an hour, in which Miss Hobhouse gathered that it was intended for her to take the hint to England that Germany was willing to negotiate a peace if advances were made to her. She endeavoured to convey this to important people on her return, but as might be expected, with no result.

Another day an expedition to Ruhleben was arranged. Now that the conditions there are so well known we need not dwell on her impressions, beyond the fact that she realized that the really serious part of the problem appeared to be the mental effect of such prolonged captivity. She promised to leave no stone unturned in working for an exchange with German prisoners, and on her return she was active in urging this on the competent authorities, and submitted to Lord Newton a scheme for closing the camps almost entirely and substituting internment at liberty in a neutral State.

By the 23rd June Emily Hobhouse was back again in Zurich, eager to return to England to give news of all she had learnt. She realized that her action in going to Germany must give cause for great suspicion by the authorities, and she was exceedingly nervous lest her return should be pre-

vented. This, despite a good many anxious moments, did not prove to be the case, and on the contrary, she afterwards believed that her remaining in Switzerland would have been more difficult.

CHAPTER XVII

POST-WAR WORK FOR GERMAN CHILDREN; ILLNESS AND DEATH

1919

THE end of the war opened up possibilities of work into which Miss Hobhouse threw all her energies, notwithstanding her continued bad health, and we find her actively engaged in forwarding three pieces of work, due mainly to her initiative, viz., the Fund to aid Swiss Relief for starving children, the Russian Babies' Fund, and an organization for helping the children of Leipzig. The widespread suffering in Central and Eastern Europe which was disclosed at the end of the war, is now so well known that it is not necessary here to describe it. Our readers must be only too familiar with the facts.

Very soon after the Armistice Miss Hobhouse learned from friends in Switzerland that parties of starving Viennese children could be brought there to the more plentiful food and happier atmosphere if funds could be gathered. She went at once to Miss Edith Durham, and asked if she would help her to guarantee to collect £400. On her agreeing they became joint Hon. Secretaries of an English fund, and were helped by Lady Clare Annesley and Miss Joyce Tarring, whilst Mr. T. R. Bridgwater acted as Chairman. They worked ceaselessly, writing endless letters by hand, and paying postage and all working expenses themselves. As free hospitality and reduced railway fares were given by the

Swiss, £4 per child was sufficient to cover all expenses, and very many were benefited.

At first only Austrian children were brought, but finally help was extended to Germans, Czechs, Hungarians and Swiss from famine areas. A sanatorium at Olivella, near Morcote, was taken, and finally another on the Lake of Lugano.

When the Save the Children Fund was started in April 1919, on a much wider basis, and on a far larger scale, it was obvious that no *raison d'être* remained for the smaller fund and it was discontinued, though with regret, by the devoted workers, who, in helping only ex-enemy children, had desired that their efforts should carry a special message of peace.

The Russian Babies' Fund made an appeal for money in July 1919 (with Emily Hobhouse as its Chairman), for sending milk, baby-clothes, soap, etc., to meet the urgent wants of Russian children. The Fund was affiliated to the Friends' Relief Fund, and the money collected went to purchase part of a consignment sent out by that body, and finally distributed by them, as only one of the representatives of the Russian Babies' Fund was allowed to enter Russia, and she only remained a short time.

But far more exacting was the work which Emily Hobhouse initiated a little later for the Leipzig children. In September 1919 she went to Austria and Germany as the representative of the Save the Children Fund, with Miss Joyce Tarring, and her attention was drawn to the conditions obtaining at Leipzig by Professor Woltereck, from that town, whom she met at Berne. She decided to go both to Vienna and Leipzig, so as to make a comparative study of both towns, being accompanied by Dr. Schwytzer, a Swiss

medical man, to give the help of his expert knowledge. Their reports were published by the International Save the Children Fund. The result of their comparison of the two towns – of which the sufferings of Vienna were already well known – may be given briefly in Dr. Schwytzer's words :

'In Vienna, painful resignation, here sterner faces and lines of embittered sorrow. The fat beer drinker is no longer to be seen. The horses at Leipzig look worse than those in Vienna; some of them are like walking skeletons. Cabs are hard to get, automobiles are scarce. But there is more traffic here, more goods and more coal being carted. The people look pale, often yellowish grey; ruddy complexions are seen only among the farmers at the markets. The children are pale and emaciated and often rickety. Nowhere did I see so contented a group of children as those that came from the American kitchens in Vienna. In the slums you see the same pitiful sights as in Vienna. The Leipzig children appear to be now at their lowest stage; the Viennese are perhaps a little better than six months ago, before the American Aid. There is now no public feeding of children at Leipzig except in the school of the slightly feeble-minded children (600). Before the war there was an extensive system of school feeding. The rationing has been more efficacious at Leipzig than in Vienna – the poorest people do not look so bad, the rich not so well. Profiteering, though well developed, has not reached the same dimensions as at Vienna.'

Having found such urgent need, Emily Hobhouse set to work as usual to meet it. A promise of £100 weekly for six months from Baron Schröder gave her heart to go on, and in January 1920 feeding was started in four schools, containing 225 children, and this soon increased to the provision of meals for 11,000 children of school age in the east of the town.

By this arrangement the younger children of the eastern part of the town, and all the children in the other districts of it, were left to the care of the American Quakers, whose organization was then extending throughout Germany.

Lady Clare Annesley, who was with her at this time, writes:

‘The thing which I admired most about Miss Hobhouse was her tireless energy, the domination of her mind over physical weakness. She was undaunted by all opposition from the authorities on her arrival in Leipzig; then and later, when the feeding was established and much appreciated, she would go into every detail personally. Her amazing power of organization did not lessen her intense sympathy with individual cases of suffering, nor did it diminish her delight in moving among the children and teachers in the schools as their friend. . . . The self-discipline, which seemed to be part of her nature, must have appeared often to others as harshness. She had no tolerance with doing things “rather more or less” and would accept no excuse for any inaccuracy.’

Her personal zeal in the matter attracted funds from widely scattered sources – from the English and Swiss Save

the Children Funds, from the Danish Red Cross, and above all from her friends in South Africa, who, through Mrs. Steyn, sent continuous and generous amounts.¹ In England Dr. Markel was able to send large sums from an anonymous donor, and Mr. Alfred Whitley organized a fund in Halifax which was divided between the Leipzig centre and the work of the Friends. He himself took an untiring interest in the work. It was essentially a personal work of Miss Hobhouse's. She ceased in April 1920 to represent the Save the Children Fund, and after October she received no further funds from them. She preferred to act quite independently, and not to work in conjunction with one of the large relief organizations. It was indeed extraordinary that, with no office, no organization, and no paid helpers, she was able to carry through a work on such a big scale. That it was due to her wonderful faith and determination was freely realized by her German collaborators; but to them also must be attributed a great share in the work, for doctors, teachers, all were needed to give of their unfailing help to make the work a success, and in particular credit was assigned to Frau Mansfeld, whose able supervision was constantly and devotedly exercised, and who arranged the purchase of supplies almost entirely from Switzerland and Denmark so as not to diminish the sparse German food.

The portions given were considered to be supplementary, rather than complete meals, and contained about 700 calories each. From January 1920 to January 1921, 3,444,929 portions of warm dinner, and from January

¹ Mrs. Steyn collected £12,000, to which was added £5,000 through the South African Government £ for £ grant. Large quantities of food and clothing were also sent.

1921 till March 1922, when the work concluded, 1,455,904 portions of $\frac{1}{4}$ litre of fresh milk or cocoa and a roll were distributed. The report by Dr. Schonfeld, Treasurer of Leipzig, shows that £46,700 and over 1 million marks had been collected towards this, and 1,263,287 kilograms of food purchased. The German Government furnished some of the supplies, and none of the money collected by Miss Hobhouse was spent on administrative expenses.

Feeding was not the only form taken by Miss Hobhouse's work. In addition, clothing was distributed and some of the money sent from South Africa was formed into a trust by means of which children were sent to the Black Forest, to Switzerland, or to the sea to restore their health after the long malnutrition they had endured. In fact her energy and initiative gave an impetus to much other work for the benefit of the town.

Appreciation of her remarkable help was freely expressed to Miss Hobhouse. The children wrote letters of thanks to her; they recited poems to her in the Rathaus; a Tablet and Document of presentation were sent to her by the City of Leipzig, as well as a letter of thanks from a group of widely-known Germans; the German Red Cross gave her their decoration of the 2nd Class, and perhaps most significant of all, a marble bust of her by Professor Molitor was placed in the Rathaus of Leipzig with other benefactors of the city.

Emily Hobhouse did not remain at Leipzig throughout the course of the work — her health would not allow it, though she speaks of amazement at the prosperity of England and the abnormal size of the children when her eyes had become accustomed to misery after a year spent in

Central Europe. During a very serious illness early in 1921 she was nursed by the French sisters at the Casa di Salute in Rome. The years following were full of illness and suffering, though her interest in public affairs remained unabated till her death.

In 1923 she published the translation of the personal narrative of one of her Boer friends during the S. African war¹ and she also prepared for publication after her death a collection of similar shorter narratives from a number of women under the title of *War without Glamour*.²

A very generous gift from friends in South Africa provided the wherewithal to buy a house, the intention of the kind donors being to provide a home for the rest of her life. She fixed upon a house in St. Ives, where for a time she was very happy, but eventually she found the need of the companionship of her London friends, and in 1923 she moved to a house in Tor Gardens on Campden Hill, much enjoying visits from her many relatives and friends, till the winter of 1925-6, the last of her life. This she spent in a bungalow near the sea in Sussex, much to the distress of her friends, who realized that a summer cottage was most unsuitable for an invalid in the inclemency of winter, and with only one or two friends within reach. Her letters thence, and in early spring from the Isle of Wight to her faithful friend Mrs. Steyn, reveal the pathos of the close of her life. In extreme weakness, and often great suffering, scarcely able to leave her bed, with only the care of a young girl, and

¹ *Tant Alie of Transvaal, Her Diary, 1880-1902*. Translated from the Taal by E. Hobhouse. George Allen & Unwin, 1923.

² *War without Glamour, or Women's Experiences written by Themselves, 1899-1902*. Historical records collected and translated by E. Hobhouse. Nasionale Pers Beperk, Bloemfontein, 1927.

surrounded by none of the comforts so necessary in illness, she could not avoid feeling sad and lonely. She was constantly worried by the difficulty of making arrangements in her weak condition for a permanent home which she still thought she might need, and how to meet the heavy expenses incident to helplessness. Yet she counted up her mercies and made a respectable list of them!

On the 14th March she wrote:

‘I have all my life looked forward so greatly to death, — the rest, the peace, the greatness of it. Just as I look forward to sleep after the heavy work of a fatiguing day, so I have always (and still do) look forward to death.

‘ “Death comes to set thee free,
Oh! greet him cheerily,
As thy best friend,
And all thy woes shall cease,
And in eternal peace,
Thy penance end.”

Do you remember these lines from Sintram? I wrote them down in my teens, — the whole poem, and all my life they have echoed in my thoughts.’

When at last she returned to London, on 1st June 1926, she had to be brought in an ambulance, sent by the kindness of a friend, and it was evident that the end was near. Characteristically, she had asked many of her friends to come and see her on her arrival to discuss with her the urgent questions of the day, and they came, to find her dying. The end came on the 8th June, and a service was held at St. Mary Abbot’s Church, Kensington, in the presence of many of her

relatives and friends – a quiet gathering of her personal circle followed by cremation.

In great contrast to this was the very remarkable ceremony which was held in October of the same year at Bloemfontein, when her ashes were placed in a niche of the great monument to the 26,000 women and children who died in the Boer War, to whose cause Emily Hobhouse had devoted the very prime of her life. It was a wonderful recognition of the work of a private individual, unconnected with the country save by the ties of common humanity. No more beautiful resting-place could have been found for one who so loved South Africa, than under the stately obelisk, in the midst of the great silent veld, seen, pointing upwards, from far and near.

The ceremony was described by her devoted friend, Mrs. Murray, as follows:

‘At the Church, which was overflowing, the way to the door was lined with students in caps and gowns – the girls on one side and the boys on the other; the scene in the church was very impressive – beneath the high pulpit and around the wide space in front were banked masses of wreaths and flowers, and in the centre on a table covered with a purple velvet cloth rested the casket with the ashes, on either side of which lay a sheaf of madonna lilies. . . . When we were all in our places, there came in six young girls all specially chosen and dressed in pale mauve with veils of the same colour fastened with a band round their heads – who stood three on each side of the casket of which they were to be the bearers. Though the service was not a long one it was long enough to be a strain for them standing,

and with their heads bowed, and suddenly one of them sank down in a dead faint and had to be carried out. . . . After the casket had been carried out by the six young girls [*sic*] it was a long time before the church could be cleared so that we could not see the procession forming, the commando ahead, then the students, then several hundred school-girls in white with white veils and each carrying a palm branch, then a long queue of walkers, before our car came at the head of the long queue of cars, so you may think what a time it took to get over the couple of miles we had to go. . . . As we neared the koppies where the monument stands and where alone President Steyn and de Wet are buried, it was a wonderful scene. There were trains which had taken out crowds of people, the nearest koppie was crowded to the top, while all around were endless cars. Only Mrs. Steyn's car was allowed to come right up to the monument, below which seats were arranged, and we were close under where the speakers were seated. It was really a very wonderful sight. . . . The monument stands in very impressive surroundings beside these two koppies sparsely covered with brush, and all around the vast veld stretching away to the horizon. It seemed to me that the lower koppie was occupied by natives and coloured people, but the higher one was massed with people to the very top, and made a really very wonderful picture with the choir all in white and the band a little below. As the casket was placed in its niche the band played the Dead March and every one stood. After that the schoolgirls in white filed up and laid their palms on President Steyn's tomb in front of the monument, and upon that were laid

hundreds of wreaths, many of which had been brought from the church. When all had been placed the blessing was pronounced and all was over.¹

Two Ministers of the Crown (Dr. D. F. Malan and General Kemp) made speeches and General Hertzog cabled from London:

'We are with you and participate with you in demonstration of appreciation and homage to one who so nobly sacrificed herself in love for the women of South Africa. Emily Hobhouse is henceforth one with us in all our tributes of honour and affection.'

Dr. N. J. van der Merwe, M.L.A., spoke as one of the thousands of boys who were in the concentration camps, who saw their mothers and sisters suffer. He said that Emily Hobhouse, in 1913, uttered a prophetic note when she said it would no longer be necessary for South Africa to shed blood to realize its ideals. He was convinced of that. 'Time and eternity were on the side of Emily Hobhouse and the cause for which she suffered.'

But the speech which struck the highest note was that of General Smuts, of which the *Bloemfontein Friend* (28 October 1926) wrote:

'His appeal was not for the patriotism of the Afrikaner or of the Englishman or of the Scotsman, but

¹ From Mrs. Steyn, to whom was due the initiation and organization of the burial at the Monument, I learn that the response to her appeal for funds was so generous, that a surplus of £400 is being devoted to scholarships in memory of Emily Hobhouse.

for the greater ideal of a real South Africanism embracing all the European races in the country.'

It is so noteworthy an oration that it must be given in full.

'We are gathered here to-day from every part of South Africa to pay our last tribute of respect and love to the memory of Emily Hobhouse. It was her wish that her ashes should be buried in this land, should become part and parcel of the land where the best service of her life had been rendered. She now becomes one with us everlastingly. In life, in the greatest moments of our history, we were together, and in death we shall not be divided. She came to us first in the Boer War at the height of her power and strength. She finally left us, eight years after, with shattered body, and suffered from an illness from which she never recovered. During those eventful years she gave to us all she had; she gave her health and she poured out her soul. But her work and her sacrifice have not been in vain. Her work for us has produced enduring results, and her name and memory will remain inseparably connected with our history.

'It is not necessary for us to-day to discuss the sad events which first brought Emily Hobhouse to our shores. After twenty-five years they are still vivid in the minds of this generation, most of whom, in one form or another, took part in those events. War is at best a terrible business, and during the last twelve years we have seen war at its worst; we have seen hell let loose on earth among the Christian nations. By the side of the sufferings and tortures endured during

the Great War our South African War of twenty-five years ago looks small and mild in comparison. We can to-day see the events of the Anglo-Boer War in a larger, truer perspective. We have seen the influenza epidemic alone carry off in a few weeks more lives than were lost in the whole course of the Boer War.

'We have been submerged and almost drowned in such world-wide calamities in recent years that our senses have been dulled; we have been stunned, and our sense of the sacredness of life is no longer what it was in the more peaceful time of the nineteenth century. To our small handful of Whites in South Africa human life has always appeared specially precious, and the grievous and avoidable loss of child life in the concentration camps came as a terrible shock. A wrong policy had been adopted by the military authorities in a spirit of muddle, with results which were never foreseen nor intended, but which threatened to decimate a whole generation in the life of the people.

'It was at that dark hour that Emily Hobhouse appeared. We stood alone in the world, almost friendless among the peoples, the smallest nation ranged against the mightiest Empire on earth. And then one small hand, the hand of a woman, was stretched out to us. At that darkest hour, when our race almost seemed doomed to extinction, she appeared as an angel, as a heaven-sent messenger. Strangest of all, she was an Englishwoman.

'It was providential, both for the immediate crisis and for the after-history of South Africa, that this great work should be done by an Englishwoman. She could speak to her people, even in that hour when the pas-

sions of war and of patriotism ran high. She spoke the word, it was heeded by the British Government, reforms were instituted, and the young life, which was ebbing away in the camps, was saved for the future. The precious little vessel which was carrying the future of this sub-continent did not perish utterly in the storm. That great service—great beyond all power of words to express it—was rendered by Emily Hobhouse, and for that service the name of this Englishwoman will be for ever engraved in the hearts and the memories of the Boer people.

‘She rendered other services to us. After the war she came to live and work among us, and taught home industries to our daughters. In part this work still survives among us, and I only regret that the conditions of life in this country have prevented her spinning and weaving industries from becoming the general practice in the homes of the veld. But here, too, important results of her work remain. And the example of steadfast courage she set us was an inspiration to many who did not join her spinning schools. Her service here was great and her labour so hard that in the end it permanently ruined her health. But to me her greatest service was rendered, not in that after-war period, but in connection with the reform of the concentration camps during the war.

‘I have not time to refer to her later activities; before, during, and after the Great World War. The last remains of her health and strength she spent in Switzerland and Germany, in succouring women and children who were suffering and hungry and living amid the terrible conditions prevailing at the end of the Great

War. Her name is great and revered, not only in South Africa but in thousands of homes on the continent of Europe.'

So far General Smuts had spoken in Afrikaans. Then, continuing in 'the taal of Emily Hobhouse' as he put it, he briefly recapitulated what he had already said and went on as follows:

'Let me conclude with two brief remarks, which I feel sure will also express the mind and ideals of Emily Hobhouse as I knew her in life. Two great impressions remain with me from her life and work.

'The first impression is that of the power and profound influence of women in the affairs of the world. The life of Emily Hobhouse is a striking instance of this power. Here was a great war, in which hundreds of thousands of men were engaged, in which the greatest Empire on earth was exerting all its strength and force. And an unknown woman appears from nowhere and presses the right button; and the course of our history in South Africa is permanently altered.

'For the future of South Africa the whole meaning and significance of the Anglo-Boer War was permanently affected by this Englishwoman. And she becomes the great symbol of reconciliation between the closely kin peoples who should never have been enemies. How often in the great happenings of history a woman appears at the decisive moment, and in her weakness turns the flowing tide of events! It is the inner spiritual force in the world which comes to the surface in pain and anguish and sorrow. And once it appears, everything else shrinks into insignificance

before it. In the end the spiritual values of life are supreme.

'My second thought takes me back to the words of another Englishwoman spoken in the Great War. I refer to Edith Cavell's dying words before she was shot as a spy: "Patriotism is not enough." To me that statement has always seemed the truest utterance of the World War — in some respects greater than the speeches of President Wilson on which a bleeding world hung spell-bound. It expresses the deepest meaning and message of that unparalleled tragedy for the future of the world. Patriotism is not enough. Great and noble and pure an emotion as it is, it is not enough.

'And if patriotism alone is going to be our rule and guide in the future, the world will surely perish, just as it almost perished from patriotism in the Great War. It is a lesson which we Boer people should specially lay to heart. As a very small people that has suffered much at the hands of history, we are prone to exalt the virtue of patriotism above everything else. Let us not forget Emily Hobhouse. She was an Englishwoman to the marrow, proud of her people and its great mission and history. But for her patriotism was not enough. When she saw her country embark on a policy which was in conflict with the higher moral law, she did not say "My country, right or wrong." She wholeheartedly took our side against that of her own people, and in doing so rendered an imperishable service, not only to us, but also to her own England and to the world at large.

'For this loyalty to the higher and greater things of life

she suffered deeply. Her action was not understood or appreciated by her own people. But to us her example makes a special appeal. Emily Hobhouse will stand out in our record as a trumpet call to the higher duty, to our duty and loyalty to the great things which do not merely concern us as a nation, but which bind together all nations as a great spiritual brotherhood. The Roman Emperor has put in unforgettable words this difference between the narrower patriotism and the wider loyalty which we owe to the great human ideals:

‘“The poet hath said: Dear city of Cecrops, and shall we not say: Dear City of God?”’

‘More than anything in our history the example of Emily Hobhouse reminds us that we are not merely citizens of South Africa, but that we belong also and above all to the greater city of God.’

It was indeed a noteworthy span of life; which began in the quiet Cornish Rectory and ended as the adopted heroine of the great far-off land of South Africa. Especially significant is the fact that an Englishwoman should have received the honour of burial in the country’s national monument as a sign of the welding of the different nationalities into a common whole, to which General Smuts refers. Who can doubt that such a unity will lead to a great future for so wonderful a country.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION

AND now, at the end of our story, let us sum up the work accomplished, and endeavour to analyse the character of its originator.

To attempt single-handed the reform of a wild and corrupt American mining town; to rouse the conscience of England to the sufferings of 100,000 women and children – the result of a war being waged 6,000 miles away – to which campaign may be attributed the saving of thousands of lives; to establish South African home industries in twenty-seven centres throughout the country; and, lastly, to raise the necessary money and supervise the organization for feeding 11,000 children in post-war Germany; – such, in briefest outline, is the record of work achieved in her life by Emily Hobhouse. All this work was done on her own initiative, often in the teeth of opposition, with health seriously damaged by the strain put upon it, and her name in consequence became widely known throughout England, South Africa and Germany.

The words of General Smuts, spoken at the burial of her ashes in the National Monument of South Africa, in itself an extraordinary tribute, give the key to her greatness. He said:

‘We stood alone in the world, friendless among the peoples, the smallest nation ranged against the mightiest Empire on earth. And then one small hand, the hand of a woman, was stretched out to us. At that

darkest hour, when our race almost appeared doomed to extinction, she appeared as an angel, as a heaven-sent messenger. Strangest of all, she was an English-woman.'

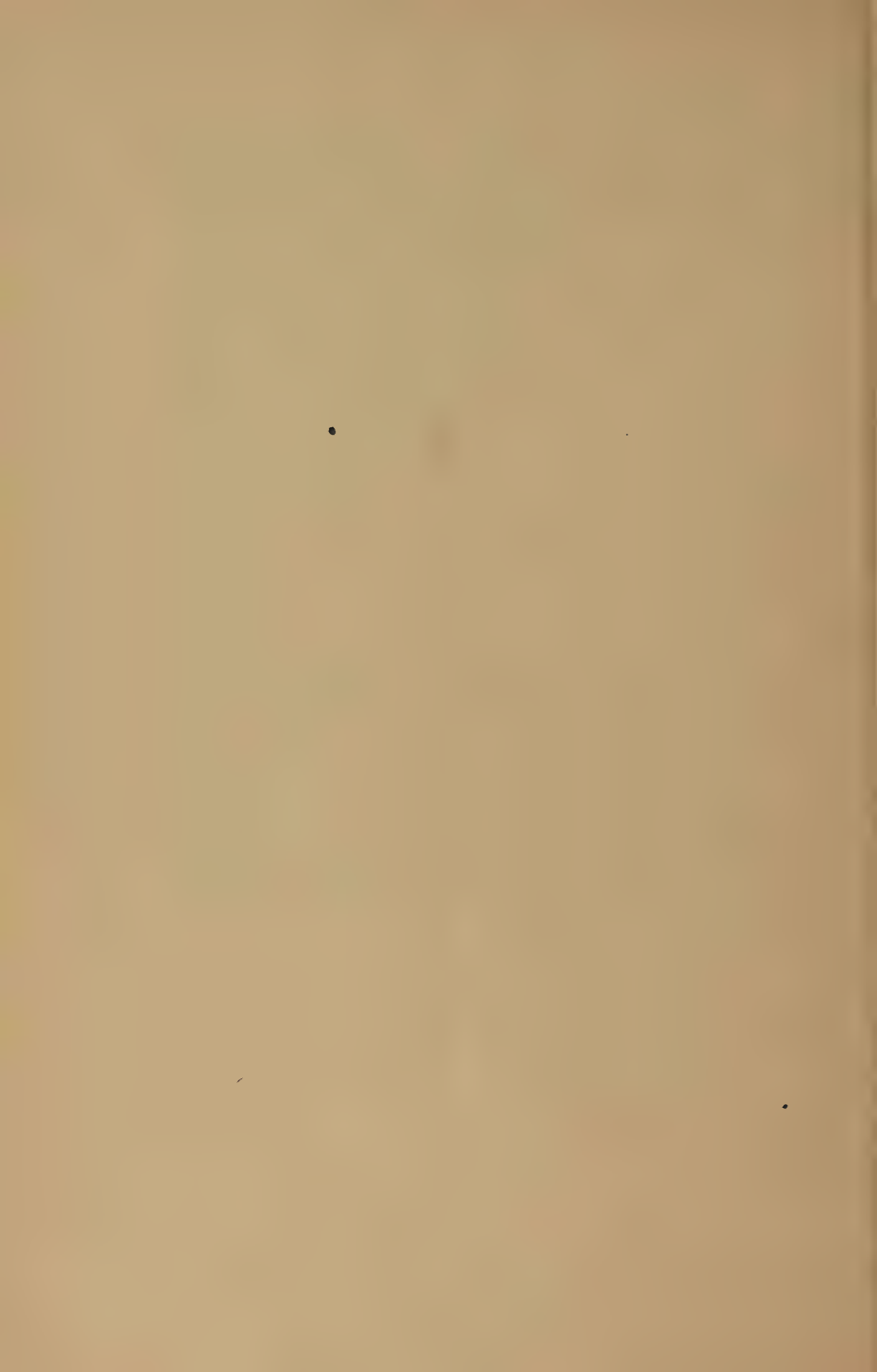
The depth of vision, the determination of purpose and the love of humanity which can occasion words like these from a leader of men accustomed to great deeds are wonderful qualities, and only very rarely to be met with. That they were exhibited by a woman with no experience of the world beyond parish work in a quiet English village till the age of thirty-five and no training worthy of the name, was indeed proof of a greatness of heart and soul worthy of all admiration. Above all, perhaps, we may place the spirit of sympathy and deep sense of anger at injustice, which overbore all considerations of personal comfort material or mental.

Let us try to give a frank picture of Miss Hobhouse's complex character, for the failings of a heroine are important as well as her virtues. She had a very strong personality, with a power of great charm; highly strung, highly nervous, she had a sympathy which was never exhausted, however constantly it was called out; a power, too, of giving to the very uttermost of herself where she saw a need; a rapid judgment, governed perhaps too much by the heart unchecked by the head, which, when once made, was practically unalterable. But it was this determination which carried her through, undaunted by the greatest obstacles, where very many others would have given up in despair. Not unnaturally, this developed in her a very determined will, which found it hard to brook what seemed to her obstruction or restraint when working with others, and made the inevitable shackles of committee work most irksome. A person herself



THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL MONUMENT
NEAR BLOEMFONTEIN

To commemorate the death of 26,000 women and children in the
War of 1899-1902. Only President Steyn, General de Wet and
Emily Hobhouse are buried there



of very strong likes and dislikes, she elicited from others both admiration verging on worship and heated condemnation. One of her English helpers in her German work writes:

'Perhaps it was the radiant smile she had and her laughing eyes, but she certainly had the power, quite unconsciously, of making herself beloved by every one she came in contact with. The housemaids, waiters and every one in our hotel in Leipzig treated her like a queen.'

Sometimes, owing to this magnetic personality, appreciation was richly bestowed upon her which was partly due to her devoted helpers.

When first she went to South Africa a friend suggested that sometimes she might be tempted to be imprudent. Lord Hobhouse, whose strong sanity of judgment and solid good sense can certainly not be doubted by those who knew him, replied, 'Oh, well, we've tried prudence, and we've tried caution. Perhaps a little imprudence may do better.'

Emily Hobhouse undertook her work under a strong sense of duty; she fought against never-ending obstacles with great courage, and she endured the actual hardships and the constant association with suffering, with heroism. But her high spirit suffered in being baulked by the red-tapeism of military control and the inevitable hard-heartedness of war. She was terribly disillusioned about her own countrymen. She found them working under a system in which sympathy for fellow-beings was a vice, and belief in the rightness of everything for the prosecution of British victory was a virtue. In fact, she was face to face with the holiday from truth inseparable from war. It is almost too

much to expect that a person with the sensitiveness to pain, with the warm-hearted sympathy and undaunted courage which were essential to such a reformer's task, should also have always shown generosity to her opponents. A certain lack of humour, a caustic tongue, an element of the dramatic in her nature, and a very vivid imagination probably increased her difficulties, and lost her the friendship of many of those who might otherwise have realized her unselfish motives. Her views were often expressed with vigour and heat. Her letters – to her family or to public men – were apt to lay down the law. She saw so clearly what she considered to be right that she was inclined to cut through difficulties, forgetting that, just as with the use of physical force, such cutting may be productive only of worse difficulties than the original ones, including consequent damage to people's feelings. She was prone to think people or parties very stupid, and her scorn of the actions of the Liberal Government, for instance, when it came into power in 1906 and did not do all she wished, was not less than that for the Conservatives, with whom she expected to disagree. In this, as in many other things, experience modified her character, and I saw with admiration the patience and devotion with which she gave herself in the last years of her life to unravelling a case of personal difficulties, in which her help was asked. Her time, her money, her feeble strength, – she stinted nothing in an effort to achieve success.

In her early life she took a great interest in church matters, and entered into, and studied religious life and activity, going out to America definitely under the auspices of the Church. In later life she appears to have changed her outlook a good deal, and to have felt no close sympathy with organized religion, disappointed, it is to be feared, by her

unfortunate experiences of some of its exponents. Rather she felt the wide call of humanity, and believed that service in its cause was the true vocation of her life. She had great reserve in speaking of religion, so that it is difficult to judge truly of her attitude to it. Sometimes it seemed as if the deep strain of unhappiness embedded in her nature, despite superficial gaiety and the lack of adjustment which made her unable to master the conditions and limitations of her life, were indications of the absence of that inner peace which religion in its widest sense can give. On the other hand, there are evidences in some intimate letters in her last illness, that she considered that pacifism in its best sense could only be the result of deep religious thought, even if unexpressed and undogmatic, and further, that she herself was upheld in her suffering and weakness by strong religious confidence, so that we may deem these to have been glimpses of her truest self.

Such work as Emily Hobhouse undertook in a time of national war-fever could not hope to escape criticism. To be an arm-chair critic is much safer and easier than to right wrongs, but it must be emphasized also that it is far more useful to recognize good work than to find the flaws in it. Now that time has healed many wounds and given a better proportion to many values, let us hope for fresh judgment, with sympathy instead of prejudice. For Emily Hobhouse had to pit her strength of purpose and idea against the accepted theories of her country. Such an attempt cannot hope to escape either hard knocks, or the mistakes, which to a certain extent justify them. Some of the faults may therefore be justly blamed to the opposition; opposition which increased the physical and mental strain a hundred-fold, and wore out the mind and body of anyone attempting

to fight it. It inevitably produced overwrought nerves and a state of mind which began to expect harshness and injustice. It was hard for Emily Hobhouse as for anyone in such situation to treat the 'military mind' with that generosity which she so found fault with its owners for lacking towards the Boer women and children, and one is inclined to feel that she was as ready to assume that every Boer said only what was true, and did only what was right, as many people were predisposed to believe this of every Englishman! Whereas we know that these are prerogatives of no race or class, but only (and then incompletely) of the very best of all nations.

At the same time, many of her Dutch friends in South Africa have told me that even in war days she would allow no bitterness against England to be expressed in her presence. To her own people she might criticize bitterly what she thought were the wrong-doings of the Government, but to the Boers she upheld the better England in which she believed. Thus she helped them by representing a sympathetic point of view of which they knew all too little.

Emily Hobhouse's life, despite her many friends and relations, must be considered to have been a lonely one, partly owing to temperament, and partly to circumstances. In explaining that she drew largely upon old letters for material for her autobiography, she notes that she wrote very fully and regularly to her aunt, during her lifetime, and to her brother. This, she says, was probably the result of a solitary life.

'The greater part of mine has been spent in silence without mental or spiritual companionship, often without even the relief of a servant to speak to. The human

desire for interchange of speech is strong, and was, I think, the force which inspired my constant letters. My pen was my tongue.'

And again, in writing from South Africa to Lord Courtney, she says:

'You say, well if all fails I can return home, but there is just where you are wrong. I can return to *England*, but I am but a homeless mortal when here as much as there, without a life either. The absence of home and life is a desperate goad to drive you on to do something somewhere.'

This loneliness was emphasized in a memorandum to her nephew Oliver, her Executor, appended to her Will:

'Things mean so much to solitary people and I have lived in such close companionship with my odds and ends that they seem almost human, and speak. That is why I care so much what becomes of them and want to find sympathetic homes for each. I rather resent the fact that (as) we brought nothing into the world, so we shall carry nothing out of it. Frankly I should like to bear with me many little lifelong friends. What a pagan confession! Instead, I hope they may give pleasure to you and others!'

But though she realized very keenly her lack of the great joy of a true home of her own, yet her friends would, I believe, testify to the fact that amidst much suffering and sorrow, life brought her very rich joys, including many friendships; a great work to do, and wonderful appreciation of what she achieved.

Her brother writes:

'The root cause of her achievement lay in the wholeheartedness with which she would throw herself into the pursuit of an end which had once firmly seized her imagination. She then displayed an initiative and resourcefulness, a contempt of danger and disregard of social consequences which carried her through seeming impossibilities. Physical daring she displayed from childhood onwards. In the rarer gift of moral courage she was supreme, owing it at bottom to that simplicity of faith in the rule of right to which I have referred above, but secondarily to a certain haughtiness which was natural to her, but which she came to use with deadly effect on the lesser worms of false patriotism. None but those who have been in the centre of the storm can measure the effect of universal hostility, boycott and persecution, while of the filthier manifestations of patriotic ardour no one hears because such things are unreportable. Emily was bred in the full tradition of "the sheltered life" for women, and though she certainly came to learn the joy of battle these things were no more congenial to her than to others of her generation and her kind. By many of them she was criticized for offering resistance to her deportation at Cape Town. She should no doubt have yielded, as was quite reasonably suggested to her, to technical force. Few understood that her refusal was due to simplicity and ignorance of the law. She thought that by yielding to anything but actual violence she would be giving up her case, and those who believed that she provoked a scene from preference did her wrong. The true criticism would be that her courage sometimes carried her too far and in her absorption in her direct end she did

not weigh all the consequences. She certainly did not mince her words, nor temper the wind of her indignation either to the shorn lamb of incompetence or to the dignity of power. When the Liberal Government was painfully wrestling with Chinese labour and self-government for the Boers, she wrote to me from South Africa about the situation, saying that she had written her mind to "C-B" – "ten sheets and feminine." My heart went out to the harassed Prime Minister, and when it so happened that I met him shortly afterwards and he said in terms of mild reproach "I had a letter from your sister the other day," I could only look my sympathy. Yet I thought that though painful it might be all for his good.

'When all was said and done, she felt, and as General Smuts has shown, felt justly, that her mission was the turning-point in South Africa, the beginning of racial reconciliation there and of the reaction against imperialism in England. When the Great War broke out she no doubt had in mind from the beginning that a personal intervention might win a similar success. With no knowledge of general history to guide her, she did not appreciate the difference between the two situations, and from the first would talk of appeals to President Wilson as though a little oil would have calmed those waters. In England all efforts failed, and she was miserable, opposed to many of her old friends, including what was most bitter to her, myself and my son, who to her sorrow had joined the army. She went to Italy to escape, only to find her friends there committed to the war. She had no intention of anything more when she obtained her passport. That kind of deceit

was not in her. But when on her way back, she found herself in Switzerland the old idea took new form. Germany, it must be remembered, did not seem to her a whit more the aggressor than we were. Indeed she divined a good deal that later knowledge has justified. The German Government were in fact in 1916 hesitating between more moderate and more extreme courses and the glorious possibilities of an appeal to their best men flashed upon her. She determined upon a purely personal and private invasion of Germany, and heedless of dangers from the enemy, of the certain hostility of her own countrymen, and of the reflections that might be made on her good faith, she carried it through, making her way to the German Foreign Office and to the Ruhleben camp. On her return she did not conduct the controversy with her former success, because she did not sufficiently consider the effect on the mind of her public, who merely saw her as once again the apologist of her country's enemies. I think her private efforts with English public men to suggest possible lines of settlement obtained a more respectful attention, but of course no success. In truth she never realized that to ourselves, rightly or wrongly, we seemed to be defending national existence and international liberty. The whole effort was a failure, but surely a failure that had its magnificent side. I could not follow her, though I often asked myself and others, who but Emily would have conceived such a scheme? If anyone had conceived it who but she would have ridden triumphantly through its glaring absurdities and impossibilities? "You were always brave," I said to her in the last sad hours of endurance, and she answered, "Yes, too brave."

'So in a way she spoke her epitaph. She was a good fighter. But it was after all but one side of her life. She had a full woman's share of affection, tenderness, gaiety and charm. Her talk and her letters were full of zest and fun, and she would take chaff with the old, childlike simplicity, and never understand that she was being "drawn," so that in the end she would have the general laughter as much with her as at her. She had a ready wit in riposte. When some one asked her: "Are you *the* Miss Hobhouse?" she replied, "Well, I rather thought I was *that* Miss Hobhouse," which disposed of question and questioner. In a word she was good company, and, far more than that, she was a good friend, generous to the point of stinting her slender means when her sympathies were aroused. In her friendships she was sometimes disappointed by disagreements which she never could learn to discount, but as a sister she gave an unselfish and unqualified devotion which ran, an unbroken thread, through all the changes and separations and clashes of opinion and will for sixty years of full and many-sided life.'

On the 1st July 1902 Mrs. Koopman de Wet, whose name has already been mentioned, wrote to Miss Hobhouse as follows:

'History will, when the fever of the present is over, tell English girls of Emily Hobhouse, who went, for the love of England, to soothe and make bearable, suffering which ought never to have been caused.

'Wait, my sister, for your due. I am thankful to say, we in Africa understand you better in this than your English people, but the day will come, when the scales

will fall from many eyes, and *then* your satisfaction will be there, — that you loved your country well enough to force your help upon her, even when some did not recognize your motive.'

Those words may almost be taken as summing up the meaning of this book.

The Boer War, with all its hideous mistakes and cruelties inseparable from war, is long over. To disentangle the truth of it must of necessity be a hard task, but every effort has been made to be impartial and honest. It is useless even to repine at the legacy of ill-will and difficulties which are its equally inevitable legacy. Some of its sorrows are recorded here, only in order to explain the love which Emily Hobhouse brought on behalf of many of her fellow-countrymen across the barriers of strife. Appreciation of what she attempted can best be shown by using every effort to overcome the bitterness of the past, and to build up a united South Africa, worthy of the traditions of both the great peoples who are mainly responsible for her destiny, — a country where justice and mercy shall prevail, and where truth is enshrined in the hearts of the people.

In words which Mr. Patrick Duncan allows me to quote:

'What we have to look to is not the tragedies of the war, but the fruits that have grown out of it, — above all the Union which has taken the place of four separate States with divergent interests and divided allegiance, containing in themselves all the elements of conflict. Out of the destruction of the war has come a United South Africa, a consummation to which statesmen of both races whether British or Republican aspired for many years.'

APPENDIX

CHAPTER IV, PAGE 79

Some Articles of the Hague Convention, 1899

- Article XLIV. Any compulsion of the population of occupied territory to take part in military operations against its own country is prohibited.
- Article XLV. Any pressure on the population of occupied territory to take the oath to the hostile power is prohibited.
- Article XLVI. Family honour and rights, individual lives and property, as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.
- Article XLVII. Pillage is formally prohibited.
- Article L. No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, can be inflicted on the population, on account of the acts of individuals for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible.

CHAPTER VIII, PAGE 151

A few days after the issue of Miss Hobhouse's report on the Camps, she received the following from the Secretary of State for War:

WAR OFFICE,

June 27, 1901

DEAR MISS HOBHOUSE, —

The recommendations contained in your letter of June 4 on the subject of the Concentration Camps have been most carefully considered, and I am now in a position to give you the opinions which have been formed on them by the Government, and which, I think you will agree, generally speaking meet with your wishes. As regards —

QUESTIONS

1. You ask that all women who *still* can, should be allowed to leave —

(a) Those who, themselves penniless, yet have friends and relatives in Cape Colony.

(b) Those who have means and could support themselves in Cape Colony or in towns on the line.

(c) Those who have houses in town to which they could go.

(d) Those divided from their children who wish to find and rejoin them.

2. Free passes into all towns near by for all wishing to find work there.

ANSWERS

1. We have communicated to Lord Kitchener our view that any women coming under these four headings should be allowed to go, unless there is some military objection. The question of refugees going to Cape Colony in large numbers is open to grave objections, and is one on which in any case the wishes of the Cape Government would have to be consulted.

2. We understand this to be already the practice in most camps.

3. In view of the size of the camps, the sickness and mortality, a resident minister in each camp, or free access to any minister living close by.

4. That, considering the countless difficulties ahead, and the already overcrowded state of the camps, no further women or children be brought in.

5. That, considering the mass of the people are women and children, and seeing the successful organization of the matron at Port Elizabeth, a matron conversant with both languages be appointed in every camp. Many women would undertake this voluntarily.

6. That, considering the congested state of the line and the ever-increasing lack of fuel, any new camp formed should be in a healthy spot in Cape Colony, nearer supplies and charitable aid.

3. Lord Kitchener has telegraphed that ministers are resident in or near all Refugee Camps, and regular services are held there.

4. We believe that every care is being taken to check overcrowding. We cannot undertake to limit the numbers who, for military reasons, may be brought into Concentration Camps.

5. Every camp now has a trained matron, with a lady assistant, and also a qualified medical officer and superintendent, with efficient staff. The nurses include women selected from the refugees, who receive payment for their services. The whole staff is chosen with a special view to their knowledge of the Dutch language.

6. Careful attention will be paid to these points in selecting the site of any fresh camps.

7. That because all the above and much more not mentioned, including the economical distribution of clothing, demands much careful organization, detailed work, and devoted attention, *free access* should be given to a band of at least six accredited representatives of English philanthropic societies, who should be provided with permanent passes, have the authority of the High Commissioner for their work, and be responsible to the Government as well as to those they represent. Their mother-wit and womanly resource would set right many of the existing evils.

8. That the doctors' report on the condition of the children in Bloemfontein be called for and acted upon.

9. That the women whose applications are appended be at once allowed to leave the camp. They are good women and their health and strength are failing under the long strain.

7. We think it more desirable to work through local committees and persons sent out by the Government to act with them, and shall shortly send out certain persons to aid the committees in distributing charitable funds.

8. This report has been called for.

9. Copies of these applications have been sent to Lord Kitchener.

'All the above recommendations have been forwarded to Lord Kitchener, who will no doubt act upon them, except in any case where military necessity may preclude him from doing so, though I do not foresee any difficulty of that kind. Meanwhile, the Government has accepted with pleasure a suggestion that funds should be raised to provide comforts in the camps beyond the actual necessities which the Government can properly supply, and is willing – through the local committees or persons sent out from England by the Government, to act in co-operation with the local committees – to be responsible for the distribution of any such funds, whether intended for the Concentration Camps or for loyal subjects of the Crown who have suffered through the war. You will doubtless have seen a letter by me to Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton on this subject which appears in the press to-day. I have every hope that within the necessary limitations imposed by camp life all reasonable provision will be found to have already been made in the Concentration Camps, for adequate food and the necessities of life, with proper medical treatment, schools of instruction, religious ministrations, various forms of labour, and amusements for the inmates. No doubt the assistance received from the funds referred to above will help to make the lot of those who are suffering from the effects of the war as comfortable as the circumstances of war and the difficulties of the country will permit.

'Yours faithfully,
'ST. JOHN BRODRICK'

Miss Hobhouse notes that No. 2 as submitted by her to the War Office ran: 'Free passes into towns for all *equally* wishing to find work there,' and the omission of her recom-

mendation (No. 3), 'Equality of treatment, whether the men of the family are fighting, imprisoned, dead, or surrendered.'

CHAPTER XIV, PAGE 258

Mr. Edward Garnett, first Chairman of the Transvaal Home Industries Board, has kindly supplied me with the following notes on the Pretoria Weverij, 1907-15.

(The Government grant ceased in the latter year, for reasons of economy, and the schools were closed.)

BUILDING. A spacious hall, with overhead lighting and cross ventilation, accommodating about 15 looms. Annexes on both sides for spinning, basket-work, leather-work, store and Secretary's office. Basement for storage of wool. Outside, a shed for scouring plant and carding machine, also dyeing plant.

EQUIPMENT. Looms, lathe type and Swedish. Spinning-wheels, Swiss and Swedish.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF GIRLS IN TRAINING. About 25 from country districts. Majority intending to teach in schools under the Board.

Lived in Hostel maintained by Board, free of cost.

MANAGEMENT OF WEVERIJ. Board responsible to Government; Honorary Secretary and paid Accountant who transacted business in co-operation with Chairman and one member.

Staff. Principal and Assistant.

All technical detail supervised by Board's Inspector, and experienced hand-loom man from England.

TRAINING. Every girl passed through all stages of work in 2 years. In due time she was paid for her products. Expert girls were able to earn £6 to £7 per month.

SERVICE. Commencing salary about £9 per month, rising to £11 in rural schools.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS. About 13 in several districts and smaller towns.

PRODUCTS. Tweeds, travelling rugs, blankets, portières, wool rugs, carpet squares (wool on cotton warp), floor rugs.

Leather-work: bags, belts, purses, cushion covers, etc.

Basketry, various.

Hats, felt (a revived industry).

REASON FOR CLOSING. Financial straitness of Treasury.

Plant loaned to Prisons Dept. and installed at Central Prison, Pretoria, on understanding that it may have to be taken back at any time.

E. GARNETT (*signed*)

November 7, 1928.

From Miss Fleck, still Secretary of the Industry in the Orange Free State, I learn the following facts:

There is a yearly grant of £3,250 from the Government, and in 1926-7 there were 9 schools, 200 workers, and sales amounting to £900. Of these schools, one is the lace school at Koppies under Mrs. Osborne's charge, which produces beautiful work similar to the Italian reticella, the others are for spinning and weaving. At a Depot in Bloemfontein are to be seen the rugs, mats, tweeds, etc., produced, through which the sales are effected. The whole overhead is covered by the grant, and the girls are able to earn a living, but it is not run on commercial lines and has always been intended to be educational and not profit-making. From this point of view, it is highly satisfactory. Thousands of girls have

received the training, and many have taken spinning-wheels back to their farms, though similarly to take looms has not been found practicable. There is no doubt whatever that the work has had a wonderful effect on the girls' characters, and has really proved uplifting and lastingly beneficial.

INDEX

- Acland, Sir Thomas Dyke, 87, 226
 Adamson, Mr., 252
 Alexander, William H. F., Report by, quoted, 83-4
 Alexandra, Queen, 251
 Aliwal North, 118; Camp, 119, 141
 American Quakers, 281
 American Relief Commission in Belgium, 274
 Amsterdam, Emily Hobhouse's work in (1915), 266
 Annesley, Lady Clare, 278; quoted, 281
 Arthur, Sir George : *Life of Lord Kitchener* quoted, 80 n.¹
Avondale Castle, 167, 169

 Backhouse, Mrs., 163
 Bagshawe, Bp. of Nottingham, 87
 Balfour, Earl of, 149, 160
 Barnett, Canon, 87
 Beaufort West, 262
 Belfast (S.A.), 202, 207-8; weaving school at, 255
 Belgium: lace-making studies in, 229; war devastations in (1914-18), 272-3
 Benson, Abp., 32
 Benson, Mrs., 42
 Berlin, 275-6
 Bethlehem (S.A.), 255
 Bethulie, 115, 116
 Blignaut, Mrs., 122 and n.
 Bloemfontein:
 Concentration Camp near, *see under that heading*.
 Conference at, between Kruger and Milner, 64
 Depôt at, for Boer Home Industry products, 313
 Emily Hobhouse's first arrival at, 104; her return to (1903), 187; her burial at, 9, 286-94
 National Monument at, commemorating women and children of the Camps, 262; Emily Hobhouse's ashes enshrined in, 9, 286-94
 Refugee Camp at, 84
 Weaving and spinning school at, 255
Bloemfontein Friend quoted, 288-9
 Bloemhof farms, spinning centres at, 255
 Boers:
 Gratitude of, 71 and n.; the annual gifts, 71 and n.
 Home industries for, Emily Hobhouse's scheme for, 226 ff.; Boer Home Industries and Aid Society, 231-2; the schools, 255; their work, 236-8, 242-4; exhibition of the products, 250-1; Report of the Society (1908) cited, 255; classes for basket-making and leather-working, 255; schools taken over by the Government, 252-3, 255; the Boards of Control, 253, 258; Garnett's Notes cited, 312-13
 Misunderstanding of, Emily Hobhouse's distress at, 246
 Property losses of, in S.A. War, 84
 Bologna, 260
 Boni, Signor, 261

 Boshof, 255
 Bosman, Rev. —, 191, 201
 Botha, Gen. Louis: on 'Methods of barbarism,' 161-2; his visit to England, 183-4; the Heidelberg gathering, 197-201; consultation with, 240; Steyn's message to, 247; accepts the Premiership, 248-9; his letter in appreciation of Emily Hobhouse's work, 250
 Botha, Mrs. Louis, 107, 183, 248; her work among the sick children, 136
 Botha, Helen, 250
 Bowen, Mr. Cole, 141
 Bradby, Miss, 67, 87, 89, 175
 Brandfort: Camp, 141; spinning school, 255
 Bredell, Mr., 227-8
 Bridgwater, T. R., 278
 Bristol, meeting at, 17
 Brodrick, St. John: his plea, 84; Emily Hobhouse's reports on Camps shown to, 149; her interview with him, 150; her suggestions, 151, 308-12; his letters, quoted, 153-6, 308-11; her Open Letter, 157-8; refuses redress to her on her deportation, 181
 Broers, Mrs., 199
Brunt of the War, The, 182; cited, 80 n.²
 Brussels, visit to (1916), 270-5
 Bryce, Lady, 87
 Bryce, Viscount, 181, 234
 Bultfontein, 192-3; spinning school at, 255
 Burger, Rev. —, 203, 205
 Byles, Lady, 89

 Caird, Dr. Edward, 87
 Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., interview with, 159; his speech at N.R.U. dinner quoted, 160; speech in Parliament, 161; at Bath, 162
 Cape Colony:
 Delegates from, to England, 75-7
 Help from, for Boers after the war, 217-18
 Journeying in, 103; hardships of travel, 115-16
 Martial law proclaimed in, 167
 Re-action of, to the S.A. War, 67; the People's Congress (May, 1900), 75; Cape Town Relief Committee, 85, 129 n.; bitterness, 92-3
 Scenery of, 103-4
 Cape Town:
 Committee in, to help women in the Camps, 85, 129 n.
 Emily Hobhouse's arrival in (Dec. 1900), 91; her visits to (March 1901), 128; (May), 137; her friends in, 91, 98, 128, 137, 164, 174, 185, 186
 Exhibition in, of Boer industries (1908), 255-7
Carisbrook Castle, 170
 Caro, 251
 Cecil, Viscount, cited, 267 n.
 Chamberlain, Joseph: Camps put under control of, 159; his speech on military receipts, 190-1, 224; his promise regarding widows, etc., 223-4

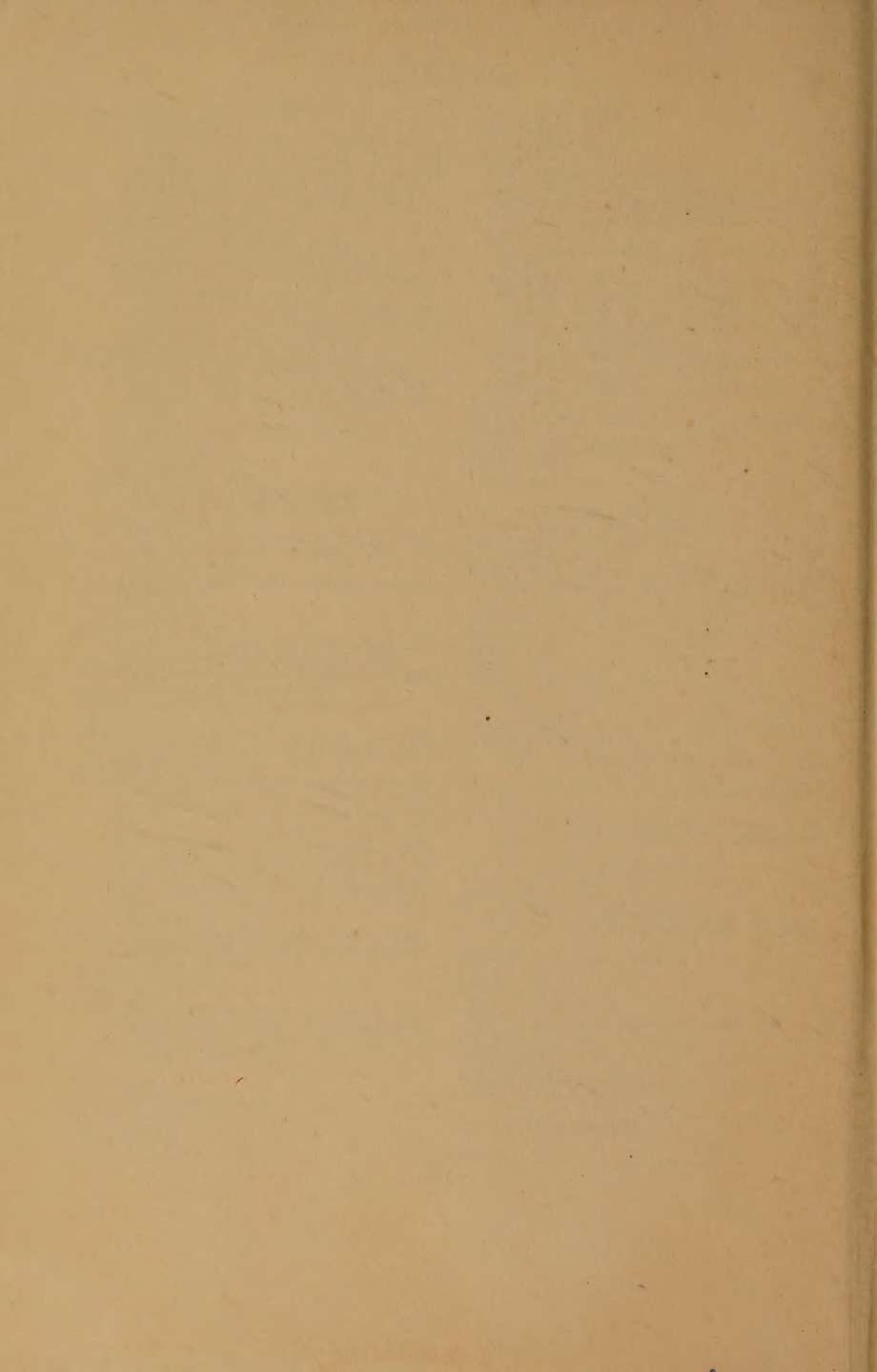
- Chamberlain, Field-Marshal Sir Neville, 152
 Charlton House, 17, 41
 Chicago, 60
 Clark, Margaret, *see* Gillett
 Cloete, Constance, 235, 244, 245
 Cologne, 270
 Colon, 61
 Concentration Camps in S. Africa:
 Blue Books on, cited and quoted, 139
 Blunder of, admitted, 106
 Children: sufferings and mortality of, 109, 112, 113, 128, 134, 141, 144, 153, 157, 202; death-rate statistics, 146-8; education arranged for, 85, 117; their need of clothes, 118; Mrs. Botha's work for, 136
 Dew-drenching, 127-8
 Differences in, 126
 Epidemics in, 147; typhoid, 109, 110, 112, 144; measles, 112, 127, 141, 144; measles-infected people drafted into healthy camp, 142; whooping-cough, 127; enteric, 135, 142; scarlet fever, 142; no isolation, 142, 144; no disinfection, 144
 Improvements introduced into, between Emily Hobhouse's visits and those of the Ladies' Commission, 149, 154, 163
 Journeys of internees to, hardships of: no shelter, no food, 85-6, 95, 132-4
 Lack—of clothing in, 106-7, 124-5; of soap, 110-11, 130; of fuel, 110, 125, 127; 1 lb. per head per day, 142; of necessary utensils, 110; of milk, 112-13, 142, 144; of blankets, 130; of sanitary arrangements, 141; of hospital accommodation, 141; no beds, 108, 122, 125, 129, 141, 143; no seats, 108; no trained nurse, 117, 127; no mattresses, 122, 125; no bath-house, 143
 Ladies' Commission, the, 132; personnel of, 140, 156; bias of, 156; facilities enjoyed by, 140; their investigations, 140, 157; their interview with Kitchener, 149; their Report: date of its publication, 139; its findings, 140-4
 Memorial (Monument) to the women and children of, 254; unveiling of, 262-5; Emily Hobhouse's ashes enshrined in, 286-94
 'Methods of barbarism,' 160-1
 Mortality of, 117, 135; rate of, 121, 132, 141, 143; 28 per cent, 157-8; figures of the Ladies' Commission, 144; Wilson's statistics quoted, 144-7; Blue Book discrepancies as to, 145; diminution in the rate under Chamberlain's control, 159
 Number of, 140
 Numbers interned in, 85; (in Aug. 1901), 157
 Overcrowding in, 92, 107, 122, 134-5, 142
 Rations in, 125, 130, 135; improvement in, after Ladies' Commission's insistence, 149
 Residence in, obligatory, 85; release concession 'a dead letter,' 151
 Separation of families in, 130, 135, 151, 153
 Transport difficulties, 85
 Water supply: tainted, 110, 142-3; neither boiled nor filtered, 110-11, 144; good at Norvals Pont, 117
 Women in, attitude of: patient, 108-9, 119, 120, 123; very sore, 126, 131; grateful for sympathy, 126, 130, 132
- Concentration Camps, Topographical list of:
 Aliwal North, 19, 141
 Bloemfontein, 107-15, 133; typhoid in, 109, 110, 112
 Brandfont, 141
 Heilbron, 141-2
 Kroonstad, 216
 Mafeking, 129-32, 147
 Merebank, 151, 203
 Middeburg, 203, 204; its mortality statistics, 144; its cemeteries, 202
 Norvals Pont, 116-18, 127, 136, 141, 257
 Nylstroom, 147
 Orange River, conditions in, 85 n.¹, 141
 Pietersburg, 147
 Port Elizabeth, 151
 Potchefstroom, 142
 Rhenoeter, 107
 Springfontein, 124-5, 133
 Standerton, death-rate of, 145, 147
 Tweespruit, 195
 Vredefort, 196
 Vryburg, death-rate of, 145, 147
 Warrenton, 129, 132
 Cootzee, Mr., 207
 Cootzee, Mrs., 131
 Cornish, Canon, 33
 Courtney, Miss K. D., 93
 Courtney, Lady, 149, 175, 231; her help and friendship, 62, 89; the presentation to Emily Hobhouse, 226
 Courtney, Lord, 86, 234, 250; his help and friendship, 62; the Queen's Hall Protest Meeting, 68, 69, 72; the Liskeard meeting, 73; his message, 93-4; goes to meet Emily Hobhouse at Southampton, 175; her appeal to him, 217; her letters to him quoted, 301
 Cronje, Elie, 96
 Cronje family, 82
 Crowsley Park, 229
- Daily News*: cited, 82 n.; Emily Hobhouse's letter in, quoted, 274
 Dale, Lady, 163
 Darlington, meeting at, 163
 De Aar, 123-4, 254
 de Bruyn family, 194
 de la Rey, Gen.: his visit to England, 183-4; visit to, 217
 de Montmorency, Harvey, quoted, 81-2 and n.
 de Villiers, Chf. Justice and Lady, 218
 de Viti, Marchesa, 261
 de Vos, Prof., 75-7
 de Waal, Mr., 218
 de Wet, Gen. Christian, 114, 124; anecdote of, 126; his visit to England, 183-4; Emily Hobhouse's visit to (July, 1903), 195-7; his book, 197; his tomb, 287
 de Wet, Jan, 193
 de Wet, Mrs. Koopman, 129 and n.; her letter quoted, 305
 D.O.R.A., 267 n.
 degli Asinelli, Mme., 241-2
 Denmark, food from, to post-war Germany, 283
 Diaz, Pres., 58-9
 d'Orelli, Mme., 241
 Dullstroom, 205
 Duncan, Patrick, 209, 225; quoted, 306
 Durham, Edith, 278

- Edward VII, King, 251
 Ellis, Havelock, quoted, 100
 Ellis, The Rt. Hon. J. E., 181, 250
 Enslin, Mr., 188-9
 Ermelo, 255
- Falkenhausen, Baron, 270-2, 275
 Farrer, Lady, 87, 229
 Farrer, Miss Julia, quoted, 40
 Fawcett, Dame M., 140, 147, 157
 Fichardt, Mr., 104, 187
 Fichardt, Mrs., hospitality of, to Emily Hobhouse, 105-6, 132-3, 187
 Ficksburg, 255
 Fischer, Abraham, 183
 Fleck, Miss, 122 *and n.*; her report on Home Industry Schools quoted, 313
 Flint, Col., 97
 Fraser, Mrs., 234-5
 Fraser, Rev. Colin, 234, 237, 238
 Friends' Emergency Committee, 276
 Fry, Sir Edward, 87
- Gane, Anna, 36-7
 Gane, Thomas, 37, 39
 Garnett, Edward, cited, 312-13
 George V, King, 251
 George, D. Lloyd, 72-3, 161
 Germany, visit to (1916), 266, 268, 275-6, 304
 Germiston, 197
 Gillett, Margaret (Margaret Clark), 231, 233, 234, 243, 253 *and n.*, 254
 Goetzsche, Mrs., 243, 244, 252, 254
 Graaff-Reinet, People's Congress at (1900), 75
 Green, Alice, 176
 Green, Mrs. J. R., 230, 231
 Griffin, Anna, 68, 71
- Hague Convention, Articles of, quoted, 307
 Hamilton, Dr. and Mrs., 57-8
 Hammond, J. L.: *Memoir of Lord Hobhouse* quoted, 178-80 *and n.*
 Harcourt, Lady, 149
 Harcourt, Sir William, 181
 Harris, Mrs. Rendel, 203
 Harrison, Frederic, 177, 181
 Hartmann family, 131
 Haupt, Miss, 186-7
 Haupt, Mr., 203
 Hebblethwaite, Mrs. (Maud Hobhouse) (sister), 24, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34; letters to, quoted, 43, 46, 49, 51, 53-6, 58
 Heidelberg (S.A.): Botha's great meeting at, 197-201; spinning centre at, 255
 Heilbron, 210; Camp, 141-2; spinning school, 255
 Herbstal, 270
 Hertzog, Gen., cited, 265; his appreciation of Emily Hobhouse, 288
 Hertzog, Mrs., 91 *n.*, 151
 Hoopstad, 129, 190-2
 Hobhouse, Lady (aunt): drawing-room meetings given by, 67, 76; her parody of Kipling's *Recessional*, 74; joins the S.A. Women and Children Distress Fund Committee, 86-7; her attitude to Emily Hobhouse's mission to S.A., 88; her cable, 175; visits to, 24-5, 33, 41, 62, 86, 149, 164, 226, 229; letters to, quoted, 44, 48, 54, 95, 113, 195; her summary of S.A. work (1903), 223; her interest in it, 227; loss of her husband, 232-3; her death, 233
 Hobhouse, Alfred (brother), 34
 Hobhouse, Arthur (Lord Hobhouse) (uncle): Emily Hobhouse's relations with, 24, 33; his letter quoted, 56; his sympathy with the Distress Fund Committee, 86; his attitude to Emily's mission to S.A., 88; his letter to the Press on her deportation quoted, 177-80; his ready help, 222; his death, 232; quoted—on the S.A. War, 65; cited, 163; compared with Archdeacon Hobhouse, 40
 Hobhouse, Blanch (sister), 24, 28-9, 37
 Hobhouse, Caroline Salusbury (Caroline Tre-lawny) (mother), 21, 30, 32; Emily Hobhouse's estimate of, 21-2; Leonard Hobhouse's estimate, 37; her death, 32, 37, 39
 Hobhouse, Carrie (sister), 29, 32
 Hobhouse, Bp. Edmund (uncle), 40
 Hobhouse, Eleanor (cousin), 261
 Hobhouse, Emily:
 Career in chronological sequence: her birth, 19; childhood, 23 ff.; governesses, 25, 28, 29; friendship, 26-8; school, 28-9; meagre education, 28, 29, 35; girlhood, 30; isolation and repression, 28, 30, 32-6, 60; parish work, 31, 32, 34; reading, 32, 34; lovers, 32; church work, 33; first public speech, 33; young womanhood, 34; efforts at writing, 34; leaves St. Ive, 35; work in Minnesota, 42-57; engaged to be married, 57, 59; visits to Mexico, 57-60; engagement terminated, 61; the Women's Industrial Council, 62; the South African Conciliation Committee, 66, 68; visit to Italy, 67; the Queen's Hall Protest Meeting, 68-70 *and n.*, 72 *and n.*; the Liskeard meeting, 72-3; Press attacks and loss of friends, 74; formation of South African Women and Children Distress Fund Committee, 86-7; voyage to S.A., 89; arrival, 91; interview with Milner, 93-6; work in the Concentration Camps, 103 ff. (*and see* Concentration Camps); visit to Cape Town, 128; back to the Camps, 129 ff.; sails for England, 137; interview with Brodrick, 150; refused leave to revisit the Camps, 154-6; her Open Letter, 157-8; interview with Campbell-Bannerman, 159; meetings, 163-4; sails for the Cape, 167; arrested and deported, 167, 170, 302; the shock, 171, 173, 175-6; voyage home, 174-5; Press statement, 177; Reform Club dinner, 182; at Talloires, 182; *The Brunt of the War*, 182; Paris, 184; returns to S.A. (May 1903), 185; five months' treks in the ruined districts, 187 ff.; appeals for help, 217-18; sails for England (Dec. 1903), 219; held up in Portugal, 220-2; interviews with Morley and Lyttelton, 223-5; presentation organized by Lady Courtney, 226; European studies in home industries, 228-32; sails for S.A., 233; the school at Philippolis, 235 ff.; Langlaagte, 240; house at Bellevue, 244; returns to England (1907), 249; exhibition of the S.A. industries, 250-1; in Switzerland and Normandy, 251; returns to S.A., 251; appointed 'Adviser' to the Industries Board, 253, 258; her portrait painted, 259; returns to England (Oct., 1908), 259; visit to Italy,

- 260; last visit to S.A., 262; her Commemoration speech, 262-5; work in Amsterdam (1915), 266; in Rome (1915-16), 268; visit to Germany, 266, 268-9, 304; to Brussels, 270-5; to Berlin, 275-6; post-war relief work, 278 ff.; Leipzig, 279-83; publications, 284; last days and death, 284-5; ceremony at Bloemfontein, 286-94
- Estimate of, 261, 296-9; by her aunt, 24; by her brother, 302, 305; by Margaret Gillett, 236-7, 239; by Lady Clare Annesley, 281; by Gen. Smuts, 10; estimate of her work, 295, 303
- Friendships, 27, 74, 301, 305
- Gifts to, from Boers, 71 and *n.*; house presented by Boers, 71 and *n.*, 284
- Ill-health, illness and suffering, 11, 17, 32-3, 54, 71, 168, 186, 200; hysteria, 34, 35; shock following arrest, 171, 173, 175-6; agonizing headache, 220; failing strength, 244-5, 252; a physical wreck, 260-1, 262, 264; continued ill-health, 278; serious illness (1921), 284
- Letters of, 300-1; to her sister, 43, 46, 49, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58; to her aunt, 44, 48, 54, 95, 115, 195; to Mrs. L. T. Hobhouse, 45, 52; to her brother, 169; to Lord Courtney, 301
- Name of, venerated among the Boers, 237-9, 265, 289, 292
- Publications by: *The Brunt of the War*, 80 *n.*;
Tant Alie of Transvaal, 284 and *n.*;
War Without Glamour, 284 and *n.*
- Hobhouse, Henry (grandfather), 20
- Hobhouse, Hugh, 172
- Hobhouse, John, 19
- Hobhouse, Prof. Leonard (brother): Emily's relations with, 23, 261, 305; their visit to Switzerland, 62; Emily's letter to him quoted, 169; his estimate of her, 302, 305; his Appendix to Ch. I, 36-9; his *Memoir of Lord Hobhouse* quoted, 178-80 and *n.*; mentioned, 30, 34, 86, 149, 251
- Hobhouse, Maud (sister), *see* Hebblethwaite
- Hobhouse, Oliver (nephew), 261, 301
- Hobhouse, Ven. the Archdeacon Reginald (father), 19, 33; Emily's estimate of him, 20-1; Leonard Hobhouse's estimate, 38-9; Julia Farrer's, 40; his ill-health, 24, 26-7, 36, 38; severe illness (1881), 32; his jubilee, 34-5; his death, 35
- Hobhouse, Rennie (brother), death of, 22, 38
- Hobson, J. A.: *The War in South Africa* quoted, 64, 65
- Hofmeyr, Jan, letter from, quoted, 165
- Hole, Lieut., 120 and *n.*
- Honingsnest Kranz, 255
- Hoover, Herbert, 274
- Hutchinson, Sir Walter, Hely, 128, 171
- Investors' Review* article quoted, 144-7
- Ireland, visits to (1905), 230-1
- Irene, spinning centre at, 255
- Italy, visit to (1900), 67
- Jacobsdal, 217
- Jagersfontein, 115
- Jameson Raid, 63-4
- Jenkyns, Dr., 20
- Johannesburg, Emily Hobhouse's appeal to (1903), 217; her house at Bellevue, 244-5; Langlaagte school removed to, 246
- Kaalplatz, 190
- Kemp, Gen., 288
- Kennedy, Nurse, 111-12
- Kipling, Rudyard: parody of his *Recessional*, 74
- Kitchener, Earl, 107, 124, 171; his views on the South African War, 79-80; matters referred to, by Milner, 94, 96; his telegram quoted, 97; Ladies' Commission's interview with, 149
- Klerksdorp district, 217
- Kok, Mr. and Mrs., 210
- Koppies, 260 *n.*; Lace school at, 313
- Krauser, Mrs., 122
- Kriel, Rev. —, 240
- Krige, 203
- Kroonstad Camp, 216; measles introduced from, to Heilbron Camp, 142
- Kropotkin, Prince, 234
- Kruger, Pres.: the Bloemfontein Conference, 64; his protest against farm-burning, 78; Emily Hobhouse's interview with, at Montone, 227-8
- Lace-making, 228-9
- Ladies' Commission, *see under* Concentration Camps
- Langlaagte, Home Industries School at, 240, 244-6; moved to Pretoria, 252
- Lansdowne, Marquis of, 86
- Layard, Lady, 227, 228
- Leipzig, fund for helping, 278-83
- Lichtenburg district, 217; the weaving school, 255
- Lindley, 210-11
- Lisbon, 221-3
- Liskeard, meeting broken up at, 72-3
- Louvain, 272-3
- Louw, Rev. —, 200-1
- Lydenberg, 255
- Lyttelton, Alfred, 177; interview with (1904), 223-5
- Mackarness, Judge, 181
- Mafeking Camp, 128-32, 147
- Malan, Dr. D. F., 288
- Manchester, attitude of, to South African War, 77
- Manchester Guardian*, Sir N. Chamberlain's letter to, quoted, 152-3; quoted, on Campbell-Bannerman's Bath speech, 162; help from, for Boers after the war, 218
- Mansfeld, Frau, 282
- Manteuffel, Capt., 273
- Markel, Dr., 282
- Martial Law, 122-3, 178-80
- Maurice, C. E., 87, 89
- Menzies, Capt. Angus, grave of, 205
- Merebank Camp, 151, 203
- Merriman, Mr. and Mrs., 256
- Methuen, Lord, 131, 217
- Mexico, visits to, 57, 60
- Middelburg, 201 (*and see under* Concentration Camps)
- Milner, Sir Alfred (later Viscount): the Bloemfontein Conference, 64; interview with, 93-5; his letter quoted, 96-7; second interview, 98; efforts for camp education, 117; Wilson's criticism of, 145; mentioned, 86, 138, 159, 171
- Milroy, Mr., 249, 254
- Minnesota, work in, 42-57
- Modder River, 110

- Molitor, Prof., bust of Emily Hobhouse by, 283
 Molteno, Sir James, 257
 Molteno, Percy, 183
 Monkhouse, Miss, 195
 Mooi River, 142
 Moorrees, Rev. —, 75, 77
 Morley, John (Lord), 226; his letter to *The Times* (Nov., 1900) quoted, 82-3; interview with, 223
 Moses, 234, 235
 Murray, Mrs., 183, 185; her hospitality to Emily Hobhouse, 128, 137; her description of the Bloemfontein ceremony quoted, 286-8; letter from, quoted, 164
 Naudé, Hugo, Emily Hobhouse's portrait by, 259
 Naudé, Poppy, 135-6
 Neethling, Miss, 91 n.
 Neethling, Mr., 151
 Nevinston, H. W., 90
 Newton, Lord, 276
 Nienaber, Mrs., case of, 225
 Northcote, Sir Stafford (Lord Iddesleigh), 24 and n.
 Norvals Pont Camp, 116-18, 127, 136, 141, 257
 Nylostroom Camp, 147
 Oliver, Mrs., 68
 Orange Free State (Orange River Colony):
 Boer Home Industry schools in, Miss Fleck's report on, 313
 Farm-burnings in, *see under* South African War
 Police Force, destitute of, after the war, 224-5
 Treks in, by Emily Hobhouse: North (1903), 210; West, 217
 Widows in, destitution of (1903), 223-4
 Orange River Camp 85 n.¹, 141
 Osborne, Johanna (Johanna Rood), 259, 260 and n., 313
 Oswegan's Farm 189
 Paarl, 217
 Parliament, Emily Hobhouse's letters (extracts) circulated to, 152, 162
 Parmoor, Lady, 250
 Patriotism, Emily Hobhouse's view of, 65, 66;
 Watson's sonnet on, 69
 Peel, Sir Robert, letter from, quoted, 21
 Pethick Lawrence, Frederick, 89
 Philippolis, 233, 234, 236; Home Industries school at, 235-8, 241, 244, 255; effects of the scheme, 240
 Phillips, Miss, 168, 173-5
 Pienaar, Mrs., 107-8
 Pietersburg, 209; Camp, 147
 Plezier, conditions in, 213-16
 Port Elizabeth Camp, 151
 Potchefstroom Camp, 142
 Potgieters, Mr., 137-8
 Poultney, Mr., 246
 Pretoria, Refugee Camp at, 84; Emily Hobhouse's welcome at, 201; her stay in, with Gen. and Mrs. Smuts, 209; Langlaagte school removed to, 252, 255; Garnett's notes on the school, 312-13
 Queen's Hall: South African War protest meeting, 68 and n., 72 and n.; Concentration Camps protest meeting banned (1901), 152
 Quiller Couch, Sir Arthur, 72, 73
 Raal, Mrs., 107
 Reform Club dinner, 182
 Reintjes, Mrs., 109
 Reitz, 216
 Rendel, Lady, 87
 Rhenoster Camp, 107
 Richardson, Lawrence, Report by, quoted, 83-4
 Ripon, Marchioness of, 87, 226; visit to, 164, 168
 Ripon, Marquis of, 164, 176, 226; letter from, quoted, 154; quoted on Emily Hobhouse's deportation, 177
 Roberts, Lord: his reply to Kruger on farm-burning, 78-9
 Rockefeller, Mr., 49
 Rogers, Rev. St. Aubyn, 26-8
 Rome, visits to: (1909), 260, 261; (1915-16), 268
 Rood, Johanna, *see* Osborne.
 Rooodeport, 255
 Roos, Mrs., 94, 96, 98
 Roos Senekal, 203
 Roseville, 255
 Rotten, Dr. Elizabeth, 276
 Roux, Mrs., 107
 Rouxville, 119
 Rowntree, Marion, *see* Wilkinson
 Ruhleben Camp (Germany), 276, 304
 Russian Babies' Fund, 278, 279
 Rustenberg, 255
 St. Ive, life at, 17, 22, 25-8, 30-9
 St. Ives, house at, 204
 Salomon, Dr. Alice, 276
 Sandrock, Clara, 133-4
 Sauer, Mr., 217, 219
 Sauer, Mrs., 256; visit to, 217
 Save the Children Fund, 279-82
 Saxon, 251
 Scholarships in memory of Emily Hobhouse, 288 n.
 Schonfeld, Dr., cited, 283
 Schreiner, Olive, 187, 254
 Schreiner, Mr. Cronwright, 67
 Schrinder, Mr., 190
 Schröder, Baron, 281
 Schultze, Dr. Siegmund, 276
 Schutte, Mr., case of, 204-5
 Schweizer Renecke, 255
 Schwytzer, Dr., quoted, 279-80
 Scott, C. P., 182
 Scott, Mrs. C. P., 70
 Scourey, Mary, 44, 49
 Selborne, Earl of, 248
 Shaw, Lord, of Dunfermline, 181
 Sintram, lines from, quoted, 285
 Smidt, Mrs., cheated of, 191
 Smithfield (S.A.), 119; craft school at, 255
 Smuts, Gen., 233, 240, 251; visit to, 209; his advice as to Boer craft schools, 245, 258; in home-spun tweed, 257; his oration at the Bloemfontein ceremony in appreciation of Emily Hobhouse, 288-94
 South Africa (*see also* names of states, towns, etc., and South African War):
 Chinese Labour question, 123, 225
 Gifts from, 71 and n., 284
 Help from, to post-war Germany, 282 and n.
 Het Volk, triumph of, 247
 Kaffirs prosperous in, beside ruined Boers, 209

- South African News*, 217; cited, 67
 South African War:
 Aftermath of, in S. Africa: immediate needs, 186-95, 203, 204, 206-8, 210-17, 237; compensation hardships: breach of British promises, 186-91, 204-5, 209, 224; Boer Generals' Fund, 205; Phipps Fund, 205
 Boer property losses in, 84
 Cape Town Relief Committee, 85
 Colonial troops, indiscipline of, 81
 Concentration Camps, *see that heading*²
 Conciliation Committee, 66, 72, 75; mortality statistics published by, 147-8
 Farm-burnings, 78-82, 86, 120, 131, 182; admitted by Milner 'a mistake,' 95; Sir N. Chamberlain's protest against, 152
 Foodstuffs destroyed by British, 120-1
 'Hands-uppers' and 'Undesirables,' 84, 107
 Military ascendancy, 104-5, 123; military consideration, kindness and sympathy, 102, 127, 129
 Neutrals' property destroyed in, 192
 Outbreak of, 63
 Peace concluded, 183
 Preliminaries to, 64-5
 Protest meetings against: Queen's Hall, 68 and *n.*, 72 and *n.*; Liskeard, 72-3
 Transport difficulties, 85
 Women and Children Distress Fund Committee: formation of, 86-7; first meeting, 89; winding up of, 231
 Women and children out on the hills throughout, 190, 206
 Spencer, Earl, 226
 Spencer, Herbert, 87
 Spender, J. A.: *Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* quoted, 159 and *n.*
 Spinning and weaving, Emily Hobhouse's studies in, 230; her schools in S.A., 235
 Springfontein: women ten days in trucks at, 136; Camp, 124-5, 133
 Standerton: death-rate of Camp at, 145, 147; spinning centres at Standerton farms, 255
 Steenekamp's Farm, 189
 Steyn, Mrs.: under surveillance, 119-20; annual gifts organized by, 71 *n.*; persuades Emily Hobhouse to write her autobiography, 18; visits to, at Cannes (1905), 227; (1907), 247, 254; voyage with (1905), 234; funds collected by, for post-war Germany, 282 *n.*; unveils the Camps Memorial, 265; letters to (1926), 284; organizes Emily Hobhouse's burial at Bloemfontein, 288; at the ceremony, 287
 Steyn, Pres.: his protest against farm-burning, 78; visit to, 183; his speech at unveiling of the Camps Memorial, 265
 Strijker's Farm, 188
 Swart, Mr., 143
 Switzerland: visits to (1899), 62; (1907), 251; spinning wheels from, 241; Austrian children in, after the war, 278-9; food from, for post-war Germany, 282.
 Talloires, 182
 Tant Alië of Transvaal, 284 and *n.*¹
 Tarring, Joyce, 278, 279
 Taut, Piet, 205
 Temperance work, 52-3, 55
 Theron, Jasper, 210
 Theron, Mrs., 202
 Tor Gardens, 284
 Transvaal:
 British annexation of, 67, 68, 82
 Concentration Camp under rule of, 130
 Farm-burnings, *see under* South African War
 Industrial schools taken over by Government, 252-3, 255
 Police Force, destitution of, after the war, 224-5
 Summary of pre-war events: Uitlanders' position in, 63; Jameson Raid, 63-4; armament increase, 63-4; negotiations, 64; British refusal of arbitration, and warlike preparations, 64; Boer 'ultimatum,' 5
 Treks in, by Emily Hobhouse (1903): North, 209; South-West, 217; West, 217
 Widows in, destitution of (1903), 223-4
 Trelawny, Bp., 173
 Trelawny, Caroline Salusbury, *see* Hobhouse
 Trench, Gen., 85
 Trollope, Capt., quoted, 85 *n.*¹
 Trotter, Mr., 90
 Turnor, Miss, 25
 Van den Berg, Mrs., 202, 203
 van der Merwe, Dr. N. J., 288
 van Graan brothers, 194
 van Velden family, 201
 Venice, Emily Hobhouse's accident in, 32; her visits to (1905), 228; (1909), 260
 Vera Cruz, 61
 Vereeniging Treaty, 190
 Viededorp, 255
 Vienna, 280
 Viljoen, Mrs., 199
 Virginia (Minnesota), work in, 42-57
 von Jagow, Herr, 276
 von Romberg, 268
 von Rosenberg, 268-70
 Vrededorf Camp, 196
 Vryburg Camp, death-rate of, 145, 147
 Walker, Prof. Eric: *History of South Africa*, cited 80 *n.*¹
 War, effects of, 113-14, 132, 274; psychology of, 156, 165-6; Emily Hobhouse's attitude to, 267
 War Without Glamour, 284 and *n.*²
 Ward, Mrs. Humphrey, 87
 Warrenton Camp, 129, 132
 Watson, William, 234; sonnet by, 69
 Western Morning News, Quiller Couch's letter to, 73
 Westminster Gazette, quoted, 72
 Whipple, Bp., 42
 Whitley, Alfred, 282
 Wight, Isle of, 284-5
 Wilkinson, Marion (Marion Rowntree), 244
 Williams, Miss, 68
 Wilson, A. J., 144
 Winburg, 255
 Women's Industrial Council, 62
 Woiterek, Prof., 279
 Young, Filson, quoted, 80
 Zaaron, 119





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